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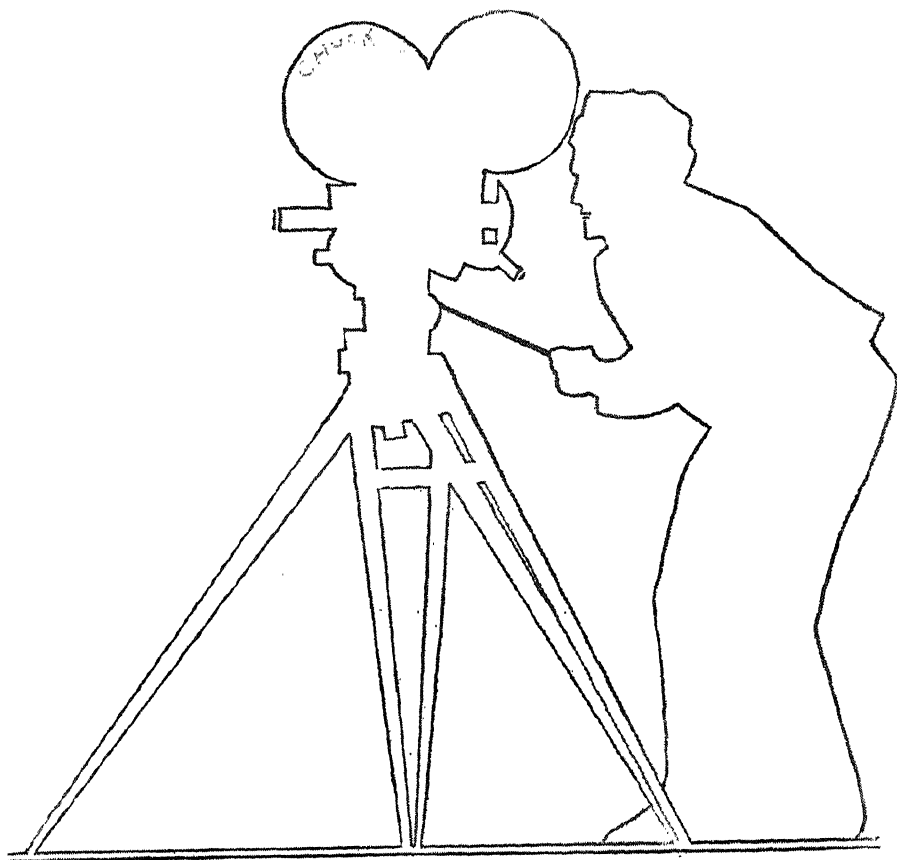
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Newsreel Man

NEWSREEL MAN

By CHARLES PEDEN



DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
GARDEN CITY MCMXXXII NEW YORK

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FIRST EDITION

MA 17 '32

DEDICATED to my companions of
camera and microphone. With
them I have shared thrills, joy,
and despair. Climbed mountains,
sailed seas, and trod the paths of
strange lands. All of which is
woven into the fabric of a friend-
ship that can never be rent
asunder.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS *in this book*
were made from actual sound news
film and are used here through the
kindness of Movietonews, Inc.

Acknowledgment is made to the
Butterick Publishing Company for
the use of certain of these stories as
published in Adventure Magazine.

Preface

THE IDEA of writing this book was born in far-off Japan. It was one rainy afternoon, and work for the day was out. While gazing through my hotel window at the fascinating display of international shipping that constantly chokes Yokohama Bay my eye caught an incoming liner as her sleek hull was being cautiously warped into its berth. I thought of the passengers aboard her; they would be tripping down the gangplank soon, eagerly looking forward to their first contacts with a strange land. In the majority of cases they would have to be content with sights as pointed out by a guide, the regular tourist sort of thing, adhering to an itinerary as outlined to conform with railroad schedules and tides. It had been my lot to dig deeper, see things off the beaten track while on the trail of news. The thought that I should like to tell about some of those things struck me. This, coupled with a glimpse of my portable typewriter resting in a corner, started me off. Orders from the home office shifted me to the South Seas. On a trader's schooner as it lunged through the open seas and prowled around coral reefs, I tapped away. More work was done in languid Pago-Pago, Samoa, in Reid's Hotel, where in former times Sadie Thompson, of *Rain*, got religion during the forty-day deluge. During my stay on the island my writing was interrupted by assignments to photograph Siva-Siva dances, shark hunting, the barefooted Fita-Fita Guard, Uncle Sam's native troops, missionary activities. Further portions of the book were written in a native's grass fale. Then the naval radio picked up reports of a hurricane in the Fiji Islands. While in those hard-bitten islands I was permitted to delve into the

PREFACE

mystic rites of the Vila Vilairevo, or Fire Walking. It was several weeks before I could resume my writing at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva on Vita Levu. Other pages were written on the lanai of a rambling Hawaiian bungalow out Kahalawai way in the very shadow of Diamond Head. The sight of the sun dipping through the Golden Gate as seen from a house on Nob Hill once halted my fingers. The type bars clattered in unison with the subdued click of trucks as the long transcontinental train laboured over the Great Divide, screamed through homely little Ohio villages. In New York I finished the manuscript between assignments to cover world flights, official welcoming of distinguished foreign visitors, and all the other events of metropolitan news. In the short time I have been back in town I've welcomed other companions that have returned. One barged in from Mesopotamia, another from Rio. Yes, and many have started away again. Lew Tappan, who had just returned from a long sojourn in the Congo, managed to push back a few with me, and to shoot the breeze a bit. I saw him off on the Century the other day. He's off for Manchuria and new thrills. Another shouted a cheerio from the prom rail of the *Europa*. Lucky devil. He's in Berlin now. That's what makes this newsreel racket the swell thing it is. New places, new faces, queer customs. Many's the yarn I've picked up in these chance reunions when we cross each others' trails. We don't stay put for very long. I've seen my companions start at the hoarse burrrrrrrrr of some departing steamer's siren, and the sight of a Blue Peter acts as a Lorelei to me, for far places beckon.

Heigh-ho! I think, when I've checked the final proofs of this manuscript, I'll dust off the old kitbag and pocket my passport. There are a couple of subjects in Morocco I'd like to shoot.

*Tudor City,
New York.*

CHARLES PEDEN.

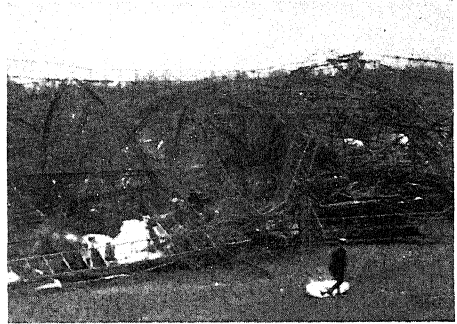
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Newsreel Man

ALL IN THE DAY'S GROUND

Some of the angles the newsreel camera catches in its quest for the unusual.

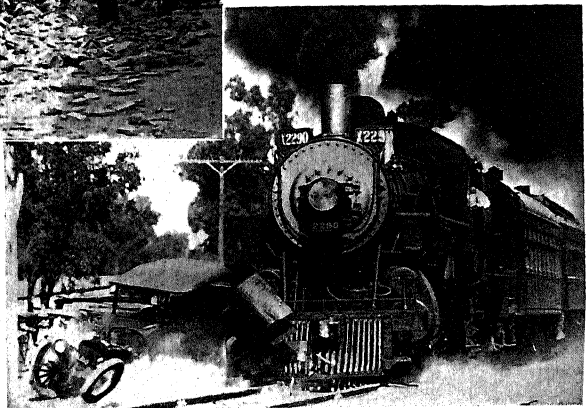


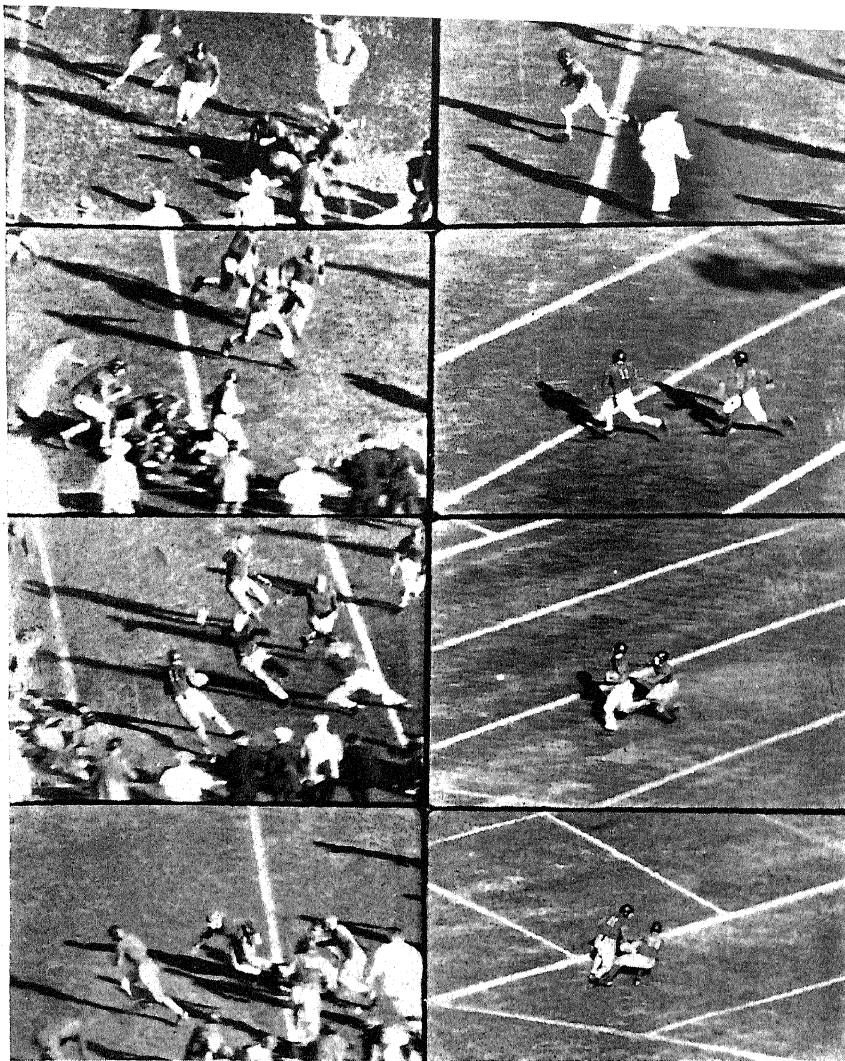
TRAGEDY. England's mightiest ship of the air, the *R 101*, leaving her mooring mast at Cardington, England, for a non-stop flight to India. Aboard her is the very cream of England's Air Ministry; the idea of the flight is to demonstrate the feasibility of lighter-than-air craft for commercial transportation. A short time later she was nothing but this twisted, seared mass of metal after a mysterious crash on the shore of the English Channel.



EARTHQUAKE. Nature's cruelest prank makes many bids for space in the newsreel. This scene shows the damage wrought at Melfi, near Naples, by the earthquake of 1929. Without water, food, or sleep, the newsreel crew worked night and day that the world might see and hear a real temblor.

ACCIDENT. Not a rare casualty; but one that packs a terrible warning to the careless driver.





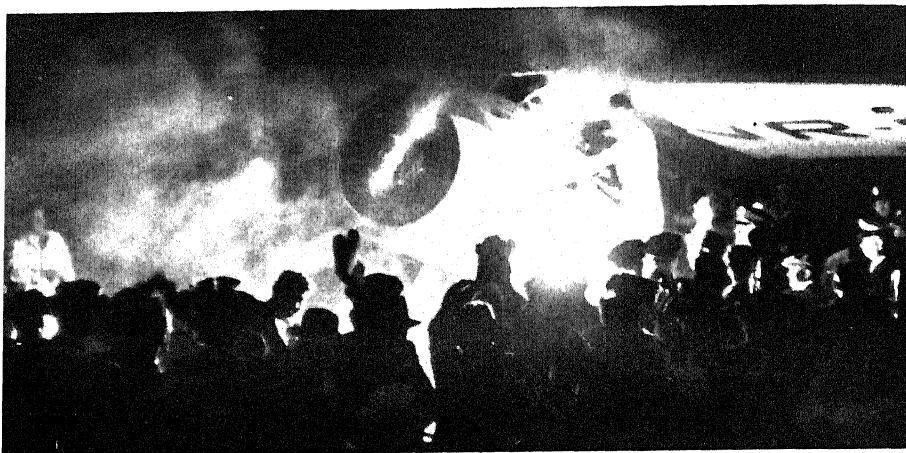
THE NEWSREEL CAMERA CATCHES THE STRANGEST PLAY IN FOOTBALL HISTORY. Here is a series of pictures of the famous incident in the University of California-Georgia Tech game of 1929, when Riegals, of the University of California, seized the ball and carried it toward the wrong goal. He is shown in the first picture recovering the fumbled ball, and, confused by the opposing team, turning toward the wrong goal. In the right upper picture, he is headed in the wrong direction, with Benny Lom, one of his team-mates, trying to turn him back. The final picture, lower right, shows Lom tackling him as he attempts to pass the wrong goal line.



"TO PRESERVE, MAINTAIN AND PROTECT OUR COUNTRY." The first President to have the Oath of Office recorded on film was Herbert Hoover. The late William Howard Taft, in administering the oath committed an error in the exact wordage. It was missed by the high government officials present, the newspaper men, the general audience, and the legion of radio listeners throughout the land; but the movietone camera recorded the slip. It remained for a little girl, Helen Terwilliger, of Walden, New York, first to note the mistake. Familiar with the lines, she listened carefully when at a theater where the film was projected. Like a good citizen, she wrote Supreme Justice Taft about the matter.



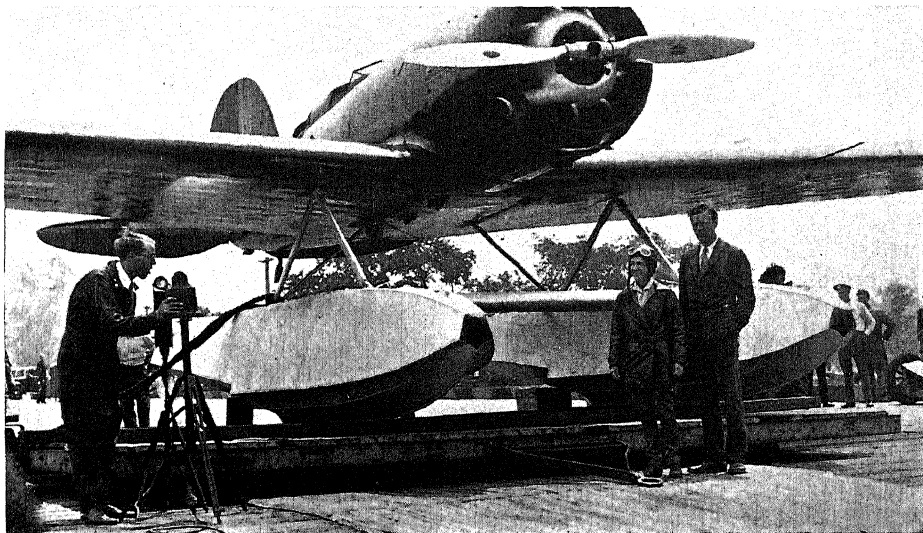
A TYPICAL NEW YORK WELCOME. Downtown Manhattan loves to stage a welcome at the slightest provocation and is always good for a picture. This happens to be the celebration of Bobby Jones's triumphant return from a European golf tournament. The cameraman is leading the parade and making a traveling shot of the show.



THE END OF THE EPIC FLIGHT OF 1931. Nine days after their departure to circle the globe, Post and Gatty arrive back at their starting point, Roosevelt Field, Mineola, Long Island. Wiley Post, still at the controls, is taxiing the *Winnie Mae* towards its hangar for a well earned rest. He had to give it up as a bad job, however, for that mob in the foreground threatened to surge right into the path of the whirling propeller.



HELLO, EVERYBODY. Floyd Gibbons, famous headline hunter, tells the world about Post and Gatty's arrival back to Roosevelt Field. Despite the fact that he's been pushed, kicked, pounded, and mauled, Floyd is rattling off the story in his own inimitable manner.



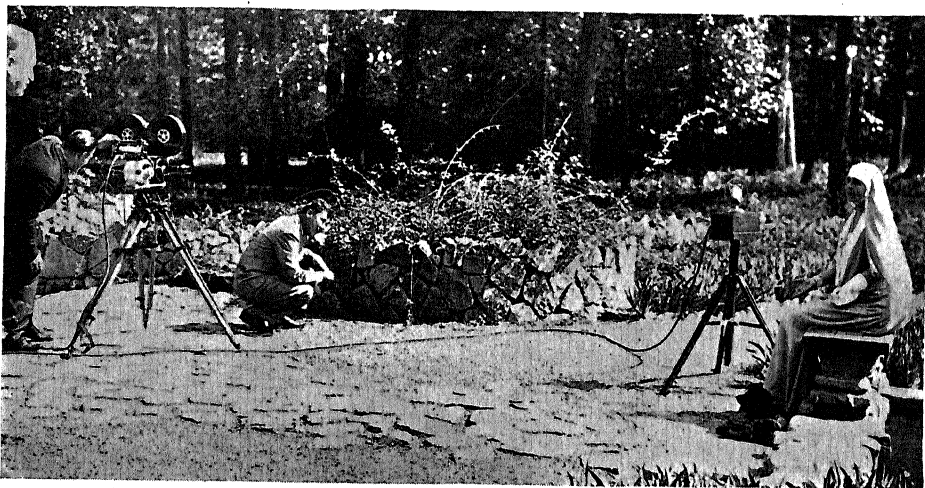
WADING BOOTS FOR LINDBERGH'S FLEET LOCKHEED-SIRIUS MONOPLANE. The Colonel and Mrs. Lindbergh inspect their ship after its wheels have been replaced by pontoons preparatory to their hop to the Orient. This is about as near as Lindy ever gets to a microphone.



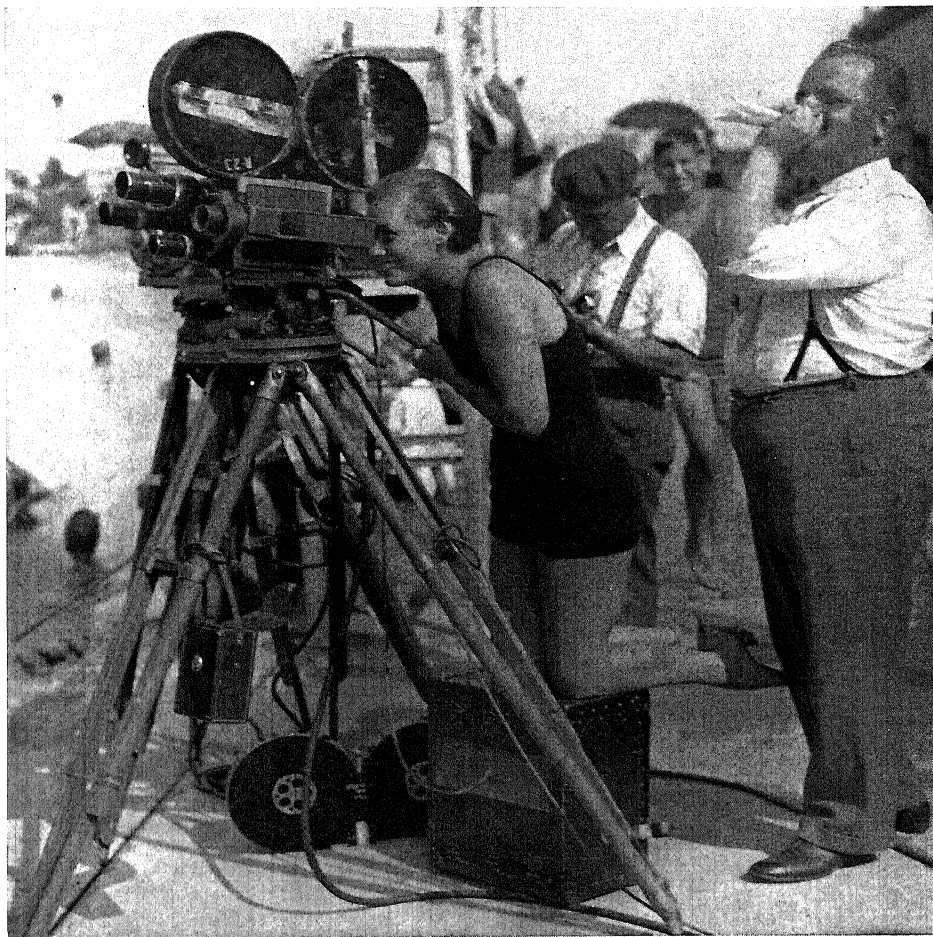
AN ADMIRAL TURNS OVER HIS COMMAND. With his subordinates drawn up at attention, Admiral L. M. Nulton reads his farewell address and turns over the command to Admiral Frank Schofield at Hampton Roads, Virginia. The admiral's barge is waiting to take him ashore for the last time, May 24, 1930.



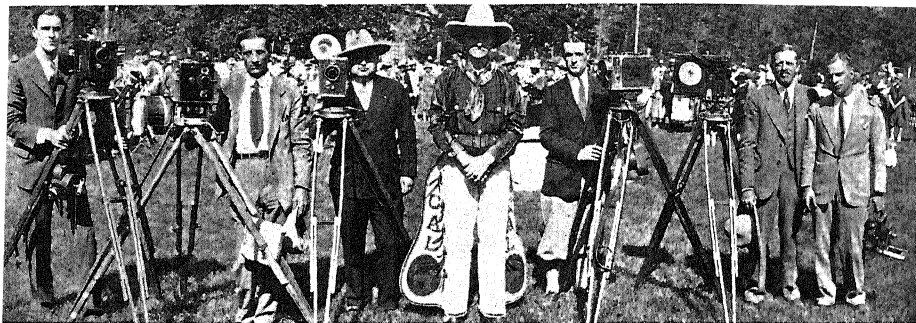
SOUTH SEA MAGIC. John Tondra and the author, aboard a trading schooner, study one of the Fijian group for signs of life. It was on this island, Beqa, that the fire-walking scenes were photographed.



"MIKE" INTERVIEWS A QUEEN. The cameraman is carefully checking the speed of his camera, for it is not every day that a queen speaks for the talkies, and nothing must go wrong. Queen Marie of Roumania addresses America, via the talking film, from Bucharest.



THE 100 PER CENT GIRL. Newsreel men vote this young woman ace high as a subject. Always ready to pose for "just one more shot," Miss Eleanor Holm, Olympic swimming star and holder of many swimming records, invariably wears a ready smile, whether in front of or in back of a newsreel camera. The contact man, portly Lynn MacManus (with the improvised megaphone), seems to share Miss Holm's enjoyment in staging a scene.



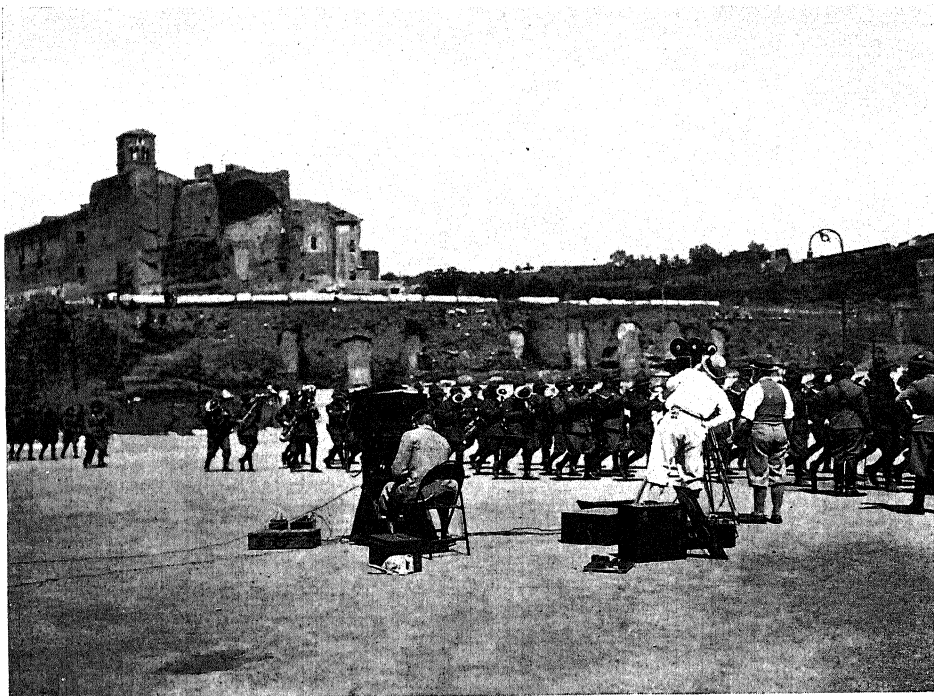
AN EX-PRESIDENT AS COWBOY. When President Calvin Coolidge selected Black Hills, South Dakota, as his summer residence, he won the hearts of all Mid-Western folk. In appreciation, they presented him with the ensemble you see him wearing. Naturally, the photographers thought it a humdinger of a story and proceeded to shoot the President in his handsome cowboy regalia. There is a little anecdote connected with this picture that shows the kindly side of the Coolidges. On the extreme left is camera-

man James Lillis. Jim is standing beside his regular news camera; but if you look closer you will see another camera, hanging from his hand. Therein lies the tale. Lillis was about to make the final scene, when he noticed that his supply of film had run out. A quick inquiry revealed that none of the other cameramen had a foot to spare and as the place was too remote to get another roll, Jim had visions of losing the big scene. Mrs. Coolidge, noticing Jim's plight, offered him her personal movie camera, and thus the day was saved.

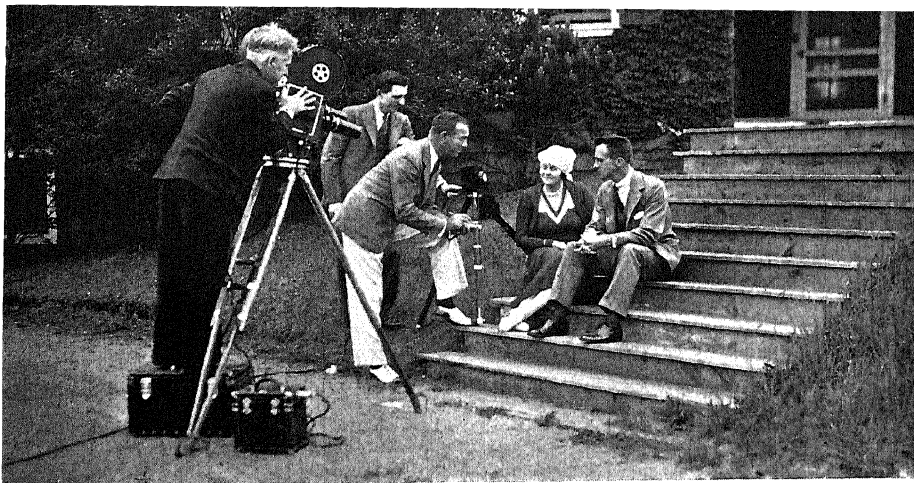


THE NEWSREEL CATCHES A DISTINGUISHED GROUP.

Secretary of War Hurley, Mrs. Hoover, Colonel Lindbergh, President Hoover, Secretary of the Treasury (now Ambassador to Great Britain) Mellon, and Mrs. Lindbergh, pose for a newsreel man.



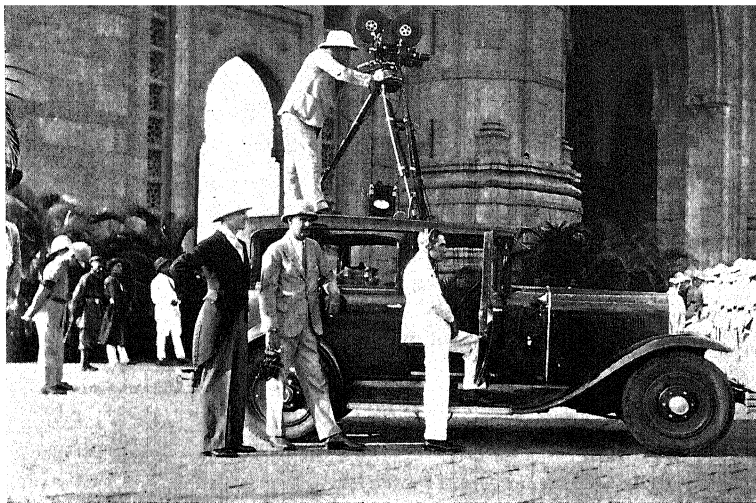
IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS. One of the first movietone newsreel subjects recorded in Europe was that of the Fascist Guard in Rome. The equipment, the first of its kind, resembled a radio transmitting station in size, and required the combined efforts of the three husky men in the foreground to operate it. There is significance in the fact that it took a college professor, Dr. Donald Whiting, to operate the recording amplifier, and a former all-American full-back, Eddie Kaw of Cornell (center), to help the cameraman, Ben Miggins, whenever he shifted his monster camera.



A CONTACT MAN AT WORK. A. A. Brown interviews the former Mrs. James Stillman as she introduces her new husband, Fowler McCormick, from the steps of their honeymoon bungalow at Southampton, Long Island. "Double A" Brown has been responsible for the screen presentation of many socially prominent people and their various activities. Note the compactness of the complete sound-recording and camera equipment of to-day.

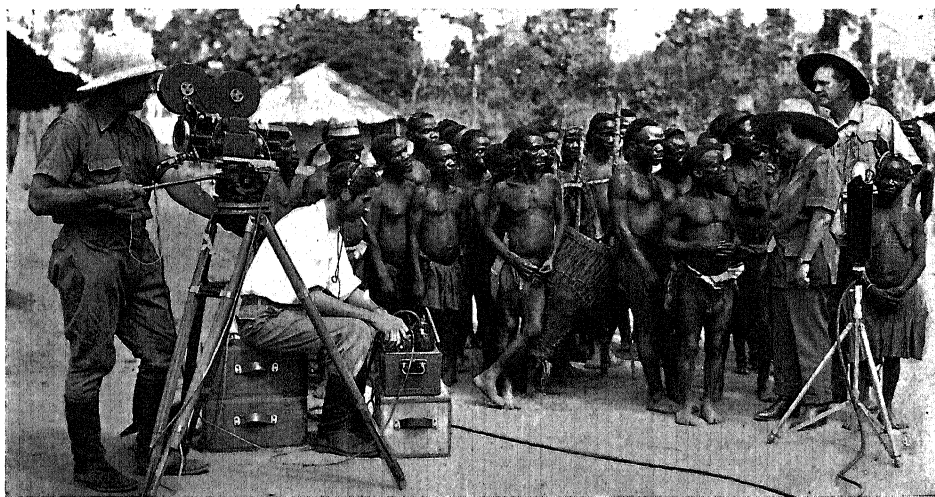


A CONTACT WOMAN AT WORK. Miss Vyvyan Donner (figured dress, center foreground) directs the making of a fashion show. Fashion's latest dictates furnish a theme of interest to women of the newsreel audience, and only a capable designer with a woman's viewpoint could properly handle this phase of the program. It is one of Miss Donner's duties to bring to the screen the advanced models of the world's most famous couturiers.



AT THE
GATEWAY
TO INDIA.
McInnis
and Hawks,

globe-trotting newsreel men, set up beside the famous gate at Bombay as some local bigwig passes by. The American news gatherers seem to be comfortably garbed; but pity the local scribe, though he seems not to mind it, for he must don cut-away and cashmere trousers for the occasion.

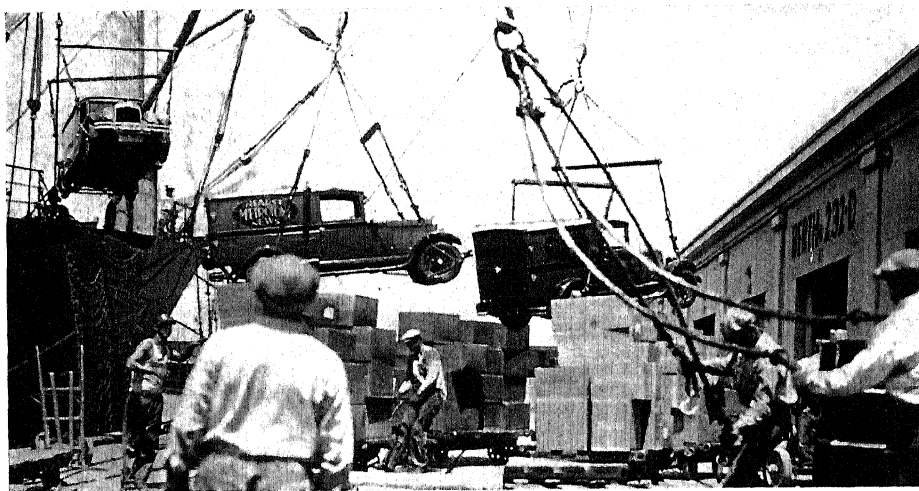


ANOTHER PAIR OF NOMADS. This crew, Dick Maedler, cameraman, Lew Tappan, soundman, spent two years in the Congo with Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson, on the trail of gorillas. It was the first bona-fide sound outfit to operate in the African jungle. During their many safaris into the bush, the explorers used these pygmies for guides and porters. Mrs. Johnson is trying to persuade the pygmy chieftain to say a few kind words for the microphone.



YOU'RE
WRONG—
Franken-
stein didn't
take a job
as a news-
reel man;
this is only

cameraman John Bockhorst, wearing a leather face mask to protect him when he reaches the subzero areas of high altitudes, to which he is about to be taken by one of the officers of the U. S. Army Air Corps. The pilot has a mica windshield to protect him; but because he must stand up and crank, the cameraman is subjected to the direct blast of the icy air. Bockhorst should be an authority on masks, for a few weeks after this picture was made he narrowly escaped injury in a submarine disaster.



OFF TO THE FAR CORNERS OF THE EARTH. A fleet of sound-news trucks being unloaded on the West Coast after a trip via the Canal. One for Los Angeles, or perhaps San Francisco; one for Hawaii; another for the Far East, and so on. No matter where it is, they and their respective crews are rolling along in search of the material for the talking screen.

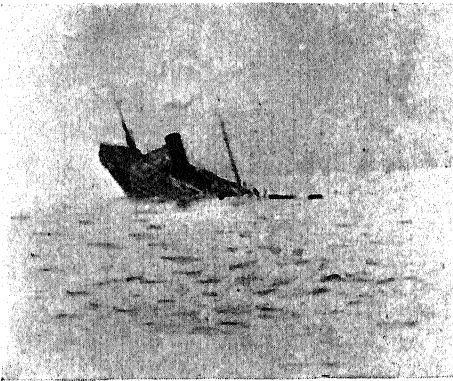


BOMBAY RIOTING. During the 1931 outbursts in India a newsreel crew was dispatched to the scene. In the upper right-hand corner you can see cameraman McInnis carrying on as the rioting natives crowd around his perch. Hawks, the soundman, is trying to watch his meters during the mêlée.

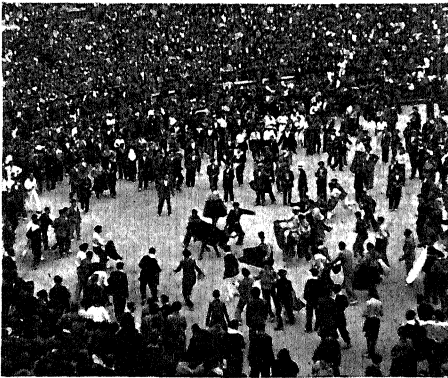
THE BEST KNOWN INDIAN PROFILE IN AMERICA. Two Guns White Calf, the model for the face on the buffalo nickel, tells the microphone how he happened to be selected for the honor. Charles Herbert, the cowboy cameraman, discovered Two Guns while he was traveling in Glacier Park, Montana, in search of news material.



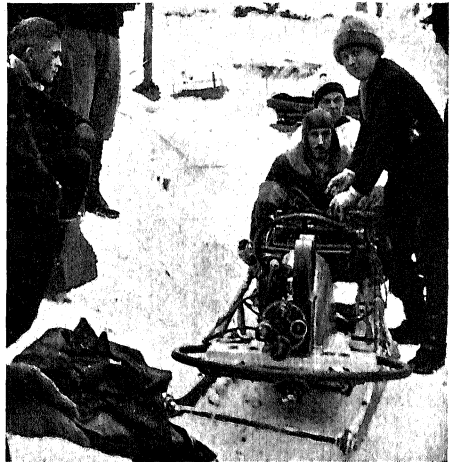
HOW BIG GAME IS STALKED FOR THE CAMERA. Two of the boys camouflage themselves beside a South African water hole, while an experienced hunter stands guard with his ready express rifle. This crew, Lieb and Bjerre, is responsible for some of the most intimate shots of wild animal life ever to come out of the big game country.



A TRAGEDY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC. Several days out of Papeete, heading north, this vessel, the SS. *Tahiti*, ripped her propeller-shaft tunnel wide open. The captain, realizing that sinking was inevitable, ordered S O S signals to be broadcast. Land was hundreds of miles away; but the SS. *Ventura*, of the Matson Line, picking up the distress signals, rushed to the stricken vessel's aid. The *Ventura* arrived in time to take off all passengers and crew, and then stood by till the *Tahiti* sank. An amateur photographer aboard the relief ship made movies of the sinking, and fortunately his film held out till the very end.



THE WORLD'S QUEEREST BULLFIGHT. Once a year the young bloods of Pamplona, Spain, are allowed to try their skill as toreadors. The bull is let loose in the arena, and everyone tries his skill on him. Sometimes he gets away and dashes through the town, and then the fun really begins. People scurry in all directions, and many are seriously injured.



A NEW SET-UP EVERY DAY. A newsreel camera ready for its crew to take it down the famous Mount Van Hoevenberg bobsled run during the third Olympic Winter Games at Lake Placid, New York.

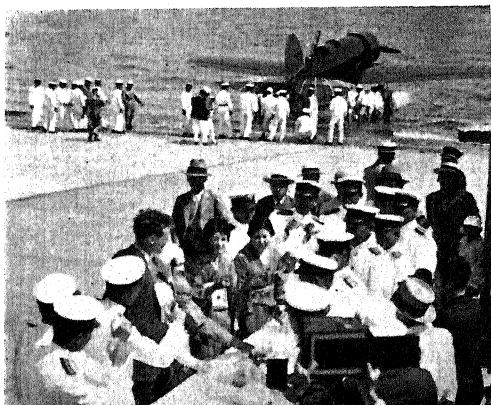
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles and Great Stewart of Scotland, K.G., K.T., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.M.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.Q., etc., colonel of divers regiments including the Scottish Sea-forths, which he happens to be reviewing at Dover and not looking very gay about it all.



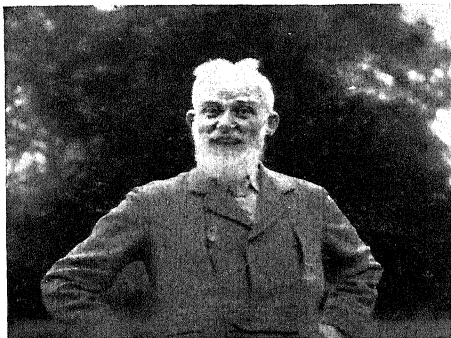
ANOTHER RECORD BUSTED. Here's a flyer whose ready wit and smile has captured the admiration of all news folks. He is shown just after his arrival at Tempelhofer Airdrome after a record-breaking flight from London. The movie mike is ready to record his own calculation of time consumed during the hop.



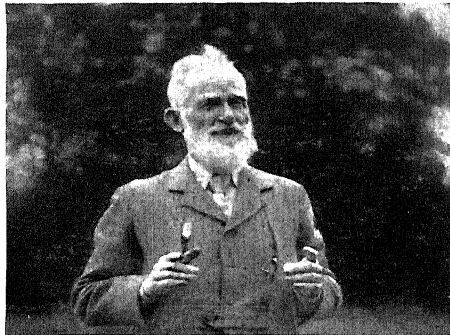
IL DUCE! No book on newsreel celebrities would ever be complete without a study of Italy's Iron Man, for he figures frequently in their releases and always is popular with the audience.



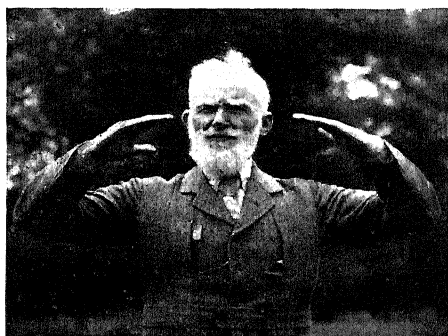
SAYONARA. Lindy and Ann in Japan. It is customary, in the land of cherry blossoms, to hold a little Sayonara (farewell) party when one's friends leave. Everyone here seems to be having a good time while the speedy monoplane is being groomed for the hop to China.



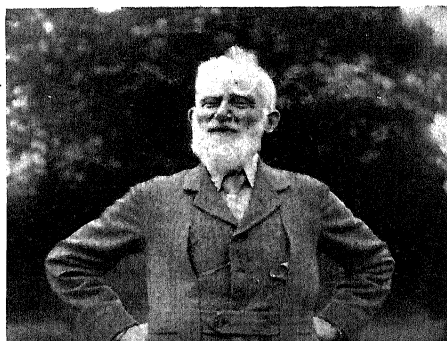
SURPRISE



CONVICTION

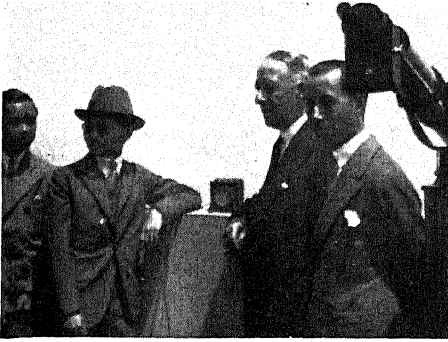


SHAW'S INTERPRETATION OF
MUSSOLINI'S EXPRESSION



ASSURANCE

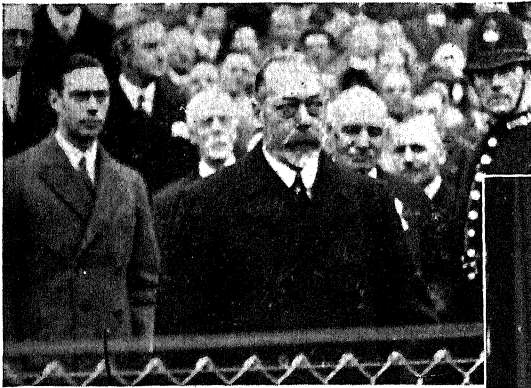
A MOVIE-TONE DÉBUT. George Bernard Shaw makes his first appearance before the sound camera, at his home at Codicote in England. He is addressing America, with gestures. Shaw insisted upon staging and directing the newsreel himself, after seeing Mussolini's first talking picture.



A KING AND A PRINCE OF GOOD FELLOWS. Al Smith tells King Prajadhipok of Siam all about New York as viewed from the observation tower of the Empire State building, twelve hundred and fifty feet above Fifth Avenue.



"SAY A FEW WORDS FOR MOVIE TONE." The newsreel men plead; but Mahatma Gandhi just grins. Surrounded by some of his followers, the Mahatma is shown at the moment he set foot on England during the recent Round Table Conference.



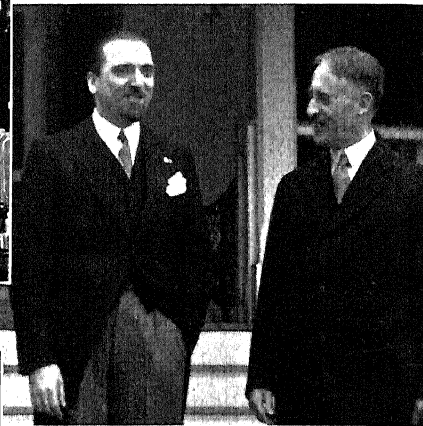
NO KING IS SO BELOVED AS GEORGE V. His every appearance causes Englishmen to drop whatever they may be doing and pay homage. Here he is shown with Prince Albert, Duke of York, as they watch the parade of Derby entrants at Epsom Downs.



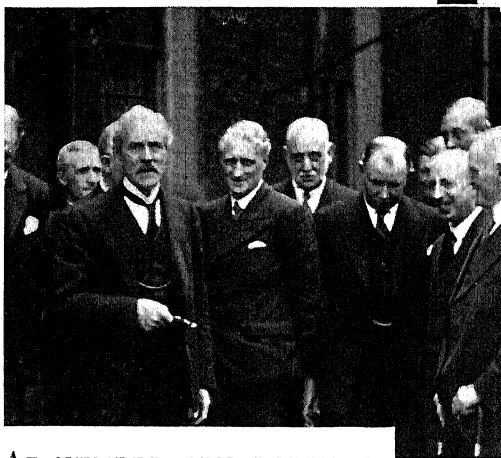
HAPPY BIRTHDAY. When John D. celebrated his ninety-second birthday, he invited the newsreel crew to have a piece of his cake, and after the last morsel had disappeared, he presented the boys with nice shiny dimes in commemoration of the event.



ON THE FAMOUS FIRST STEP of New York's City Hall. Jimmy Walker complies with the cameraman's request to remove his topper; but Premier Laval, of France, doesn't catch on.



MUSSOLINI'S RIGHT-HAND MAN. Heavily guarded while in public, because of threats by anti-Fascist groups in America, Signor Dino Grandi seems to be enjoying the privacy of Secretary Stimson's estate.



AT NUMBER TEN DOWNING STREET. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald of England introduces the various members of his Cabinet to the movietone camera.



INAUGURATION DAY. Studying this shot, does it make you wonder if Mr. Hoover ever imagined what a tough job he was stepping into that March fourth, nineteen twenty-nine? Ex-president Coolidge seems satisfied with the swap.

CHAPTER I

Newsreel Man and His Wife

WHEN you see on the newsreel screen a shot of a riveter working eighty-five stories above ground you probably say, "What a thrilling occupation!" But where was the cameraman when he was getting the close-up? Behind every strange or exciting newsreel clip there is a man who filmed it.

But the romance of the newsreel man's story is not primarily due to the danger involved. The element of danger enters often enough, but he has to treat it as part of the routine. He realizes that he is recording facts exactly as they are, and a panicky feeling would result in just so much hash on the screen.

The fascination of the life comes principally from its variety and unexpectedness. The newsreel man is probably the only one in the world, except the diplomat, who habitually travels with a passport visaed for all countries. He may be interviewing a king one day, and the next be on his way to the wilds of an African jungle. He may be photographing an airplane crash in the morning and a fashion show in the afternoon.

I learned what to expect in the sound newsreel business the first day I entered it—which happened to be the day before I was to get married. We were to rehearse the wedding ceremony at the Little Church Around the Corner that day. I had just come over to the infant sound newsreel from the technical laboratories of a great radio organization. On the day of my wedding rehearsal I got my first assignment. It was to make a subject of some goats eating shirts. Ideas for sound pictures were simple in those days. Any new sound was a subject, and someone thought that tearing linen made a r'aring sound on the film. The combination of a picture of goats eating shirts plus the sound of ripping looked to the editors like a wow. So I left

my wedding rehearsal cold to hunt for some goats that would eat shirts. We combed Washington Heights and Staten Island for shirt-eating goats, but all the New York nannies were too well fed. They would not touch the bait.

I was married the next day and had to be content with a week-end in Boston for a honeymoon. Crews were scarce in those days, and I dared not get too far from headquarters. We reached Boston, but the next morning there was a telegram at my hotel ordering me to Washington; President Coolidge was giving his last message in regard to something or other. From Washington we were sent to Sherwood Forest in Virginia, the ancestral home of former President Tyler, where we made pictures of his son, eighty, and grandson, three. That was news.

From there we had to go to Buffalo to photograph the ice breakers on frozen Lake Erie, and rum-running across the international border. Then back to Virginia. The editors had heard of Tangier Island in Chesapeake Bay, whose inhabitants (a hundred per cent Welsh) bury their dead above ground in their own front yards. They enforce their local customs ruthlessly. A boy was once shot for not going to Sunday school. And so on. I was kept on the go that whole year. What had promised to be a mediocre honeymoon trip had developed into a corker.

Finally, while cruising around beautiful Shenandoah Valley, a telephone message from the boss called me back to New York, where I received orders to sail immediately for London. We went, and six weeks later my daughter's birth certificate was signed by a Harley Street specialist. And that was in the early days of the sound newsreel industry.

In short, the newsreel man must be prepared for anything, anywhere, any time. He must always expect the unexpected. One crew, Harry Squires and Ray Mann, was assigned to be in Brussels when the newly married Crown Prince Humbert of Italy and the Princess Marie Jose visited the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The boys had been warned by the local gendarmes to refrain from making pictures, but being good news men they didn't give up. Camouflaging the outfit, they had managed to sneak up and make a scene or two when an irate policeman declared them under arrest. "Aw—give us

a break," pleaded Squires, stalling for time; he kept the camera running. The cop was getting mad when a shot rang out. A fanatic had attempted to assassinate the Prince. The police officer quite naturally forgot his row with the cameraman in the ensuing excitement, and an excellent picture resulted showing the arrest of the would-be murderer. Squires managed to secure the finish of the original ceremony when Prince Humbert had sufficiently regained his composure. That was a natural scoop.

Flying over Niagara Falls has always been a dangerous job when attempted close to the cataract. The air currents constantly change because the downpouring tons of water lower temperature and create suction, and few pilots care to dip below the brink of the falls. Allyn Alexander and Jack Kuhne decided that a new angle on this feat would be to utilize an autogyro. Kuhne flew in the windmill plane, and Alexander cranked from an accompanying ship. He tells about it: "I started to crank just as the autogyro hovered over the lip of the Canadian Falls. Down it dropped, lower and lower. Suddenly it disappeared in the swirling mists that obscure the Horseshoe, and at the same time my ship rocked violently as it encountered bumpy air. It looked as though Jack had hit a dead spot in the air and plunged to the rapids below. As luck would have it, I continued cranking and then far below I caught the glint of the queer-looking rotors as they revolved. We dove beside the autogyro for a close-up, and I was certainly glad to see Jack's grinning face. The new type of plane had safely survived the ordeal of the aerial whirlpool."

Russ Muth had one of the most thrilling accidents in newsreel work. Flying over Vesuvius in a plane piloted by the celebrated Italian aviatrix Signorina Dolores Santora for the purpose of making some close-ups of the crater, they were well within the eruptive cone, barely skimming over the bubbling mass of lava, when a ripple of flame broke out on the trailing edge of the left aileron. The proximity to the awful heat had ignited the fabric, and it looked as though they were lost; but Signorina Santora zoomed the ship over and beyond the lip of the crater with a skill born of long experience. For the moment they were safe. That was only the first hazard, however, for the plane, having lost one of its stabilizing surfaces, yawed wildly, and the result was a head-on crash into a tree. Coming to,

Muth found his arm broken and his plucky pilot badly injured. Undaunted, he hoisted the girl over his shoulder and carried her to aid. Despite the narrow escape he chartered another ship from Cento Celli flying field and finished the picture a week later.

Richard Maedler and Lewis Tappan, the first team ever to make sound pictures in darkest Africa (accompanying Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson), went deep into Kenya Colony, Tanganyika, and the Belgian Congo for two solid years. Dick Maedler is back home now, and he can afford to laugh at the dangers he encountered.

"One of the big thrills of the trip," he said, "happened in Uganda while we were navigating down towards Murchison Falls. There were four of us in a tiny boat, Mrs. Johnson, Sage (a hunter) to cover us, Tappan and myself up forward with the camera and sound apparatus. We had the tripod spread from gunwale to gunwale, and this made the boat quite tipsy. Entering the rapids above the Falls, we found ourselves in a precarious situation. Crocs snapped their jaws savagely as we passed and an occasional hippo would swim uncomfortably close to us. The river was alive with those hungry beasts. We were moving right along when a big hippo rose out of the water dead ahead. Steering to one side was impossible, and we went right over her back. The beast thrashed madly, our boat wobbled, and it looked as though we were going to capsize. If we had we should all have been dead, for with all those crocodiles around we didn't have a chance. We all dropped to the bottom of the boat, and finally it righted itself."

When "Two-gun Crowley" was captured a while ago after a thrilling gunfight in the West Nineties in New York, Commissioner Mulrooney happened to be at headquarters when the call came in. Dropping everything, he raced uptown, the way cleared by a siren-screeching escort of motorcycles. That night at a dinner in Brooklyn he was called upon to give an account of the capture. Finishing his talk, he begged to make mention of an angle that had him puzzled. "You know," he said, scratching his head and smiling, "there's one thing I can't fathom. When I arrived at the scene, after a record run from Center Street, there were several newsreel men calmly grinding on the fracas. I'd like to know just how they beat me to it." The an-

swer is that a newsreel crew, returning from another assignment, happened to be held up by a red light at Broadway and that particular intersection. Hearing the racket, they naturally investigated and—went to work.

My own most thrilling experience was the filming of Post's and Gatty's return from their globe-girdling flight in the *Winnie Mae*. At the time I was not assigned to a regular outfit, but I volunteered to hold the microphone for one of our local crews.

All that day we waited around the field in anticipation of their arrival; every morsel of news that filtered in from points along the *Winnie Mae's* last dash was snapped up eagerly. I have never seen so many newspaper reporters, cameramen, and broadcast outfits together at one time.

When Mrs. Post arrived with Hall, the backer of the flight, we figured that to be near her would insure the getting of some swell pictures. There were two hitches about the situation, however, that argued against the idea. The first was the objection of the police to so many people and sound trucks huddled together, the other was the fact that Mrs. Post chose to await the arrival of her husband quite a way from the landing runways, thus spoiling chances for a nice close-up of the ship as it landed.

"Tell you what," suggested one of the contact men on the job: "you boys drive about halfway up the north side of the field and wait there. I'll keep the other boys here for the crowd shots and general welcome stuff, but I imagine you will get the actual landing."

As we pulled away, some of the other outfits gave us the razz; they couldn't see the logic in abandoning the spot where the excitement promised to be concentrated. Time passed, and it began to get dark; our chances of making a decent picture were rapidly diminishing. Just then we spotted the speeding plane coming towards us in a long, flat dive. It sure was making knots! Banking almost vertically for a quick turn, the monoplane circled the field twice, then settled to a perfect three-point landing within two hundred feet of us.

What a scoop! We drove out beside the plane and paralleled it as Post taxied towards the hangars. The cameraman, on top of the truck, was shooting all the time. Above the winking flame of the exhaust collector ring we could see the pilot's tousled head as he

peered out to check the path of the ship. A fleet of motorcycles came racing down the field, and above the din of their multiple exhausts we could hear the thunderous roar of the waiting thousands. The motor cops circled us, forming a cordon to ward off enthusiastic greeters. One of the officers noticed that besides protecting the *Winnie Mae*, he and his companions were also giving one newsreel outfit a break. "How did you get out here?" he barked. "Scram before I wreck your camera." Just a nice guy. The cameraman's answer was typical: "How've ya been?" By this time the crowd had descended upon the plane, and Post was forced to cut his switch. Thousands of well wishers crowded around the cockpit to get a first glimpse of the two intrepid men.

Then the storm broke. Cops started to lam people over the head with clubs. They tugged and pulled innocent bystanders into the mêlée. Naturally the spectators resisted. Instead of minding their business and guarding the ship, the officers started a first-rate brawl. One of our aids lit a flare well back from the ship, and he was quite capable of handling it, but some dopey individual snatched it out of his hand and tossed it without regard for its destination. It landed on top of a car, the owner in turn heaved it wildly, and this time it rolled almost under the wing of the ship. Law and order! Len Hammond, another newsreel man, carrying a "mike," fought beside me in an effort to reach Post's side for a few words. The pilot obliged as best he could, and that was all we expected. Someone hit me a wallop over the head, and another started to wrench the microphone from my hand. I hope he liked the two-hundred-volt shock he got for his pains. My feet were all tangled up in a mess of cable, and hot sparks from a flare dropped down my neck.

Despite my troubles I could not help laughing at poor Floyd Gibbons. Shirt torn, necktie twisted, and dripping wet from the heat of a thousand straining bodies, he was taking it with a grin. Besides trying to introduce the fliers over a portable microphone to the listeners of a nation-wide network, he was shouting for water. That was all Wiley Post was interested in. "Oh, boy, is there a mob here!" exclaimed Gibbons to his radio audience, then in the next breath to the milling crowd: "Water! Someone get this poor man a glass of water!" I've often wondered if Post ever got that drink. Everyone was strain-

ing forward to press the aviator's hands, and if shoving was going to accomplish it they were going to succeed. Twenty minutes of that pandemonium gave us the material we wanted, and we were off to town. Squirming through the crowds, we hopped in the truck and jolted over the field to a short cut that put us on the Motor Parkway for a non-stop run to New York.

Another thrill, but of a different sort, occurred out at an airport situated on Long Island Sound. We had just landed after having made some air shots from a new type of flying boat. The pilot asked us to wait until he made another short hop alone, as he wanted a lift into town. We watched him as he made altitude. He was about two thousand feet up and flying steadily when, without warning, the wings tore completely away from the hull. Down it shot like a plummet to the watery depths of the Sound; the pilot did not pack a chute. He had been a good friend of ours. I assure you that that was not a very pleasant ride back to town alone.

Back in 1929 we were filming the English Derby at Epsom Downs. For location we had picked the treacherous Tattenham Corner, where races are won or lost. It had drizzled all morning, and by three o'clock the grassy stretch was as slick as ice. Snapping on the camera as a hundred thousand throats roared, "They're off!" we carried the horses as they tore down the backstretch. Kopi, in the lead at the halfway mark, came pounding around the down grade curve. His forefeet slipped, and down he went, tossing his jockey far over his head. For one awful moment we froze as thundering hoofs sped over the rider's body. But the real thrill was when the plucky little jockey struggled to his feet and clasped hands overhead in a gesture that told the anxious crowd he was uninjured.

There are by-products in the newsreel business, too—by-products supplying thrills and laughs. Allyn Alexander (the one who flew over Niagara) was recently asked to relieve another man in Washington. Since he was unknown as a newsman in that territory—and since the layman is not familiar with newsreel language—it was only natural that the following message which he addressed to his home office should cause a furore in a telegraph station:

Expect to shoot President this afternoon. Alexander.

But the real commotion started when a return wire addressed to Alexander ticked into the telegraph office. It read:

Ship Hoover immediately after shooting. Doherty.

It took the cameraman several hours of explaining to convince the Secret Service men that he was not contemplating an assassination.

In Singapore Louis DeRochemont, contact man for one of the big newsreel companies, promoted a tiger hunt for picture purposes. After a long sojourn in the upper Malayan jungles he and his crew came out with two full-grown man eaters. DeRochemont naturally cabled home office for instructions:

Have two fine specimens tiger. Do you desire pelts or want them alive? DeRochemont.

The big boss received the wire but in the course of a hectic news session he forgot to answer. Another cable soon followed:

Growlers eating mess of money. Advise. DeRochemont.

The harassed executive answered as follows:

Ship growlers New York. Proceed India cover salt riots. Talley.

In due time the freighter bearing the animals docked at a Brooklyn pier, and it was decided to find a home in some zoo for the beasts. Here another obstacle was encountered. It was learned that tigers are a drug on the market. It takes plenty of money to feed two healthy adult jungle cats. Several zoos were approached, and finally, after a great deal of hesitation, the Central Park Menagerie accepted them.

Now, unloading such animals is always interesting and we were assigned to cover the job for the reel. A flat delivery truck was hired to transport the animals uptown, and the driver, a young Hebrew lad, left the car beside the ship while he went in search of his morning's coffee.

In the meantime we photographed the transfer from deck to truck; the beasts were plenty sore at the long confinement, and they spat

and snarled continuously. A representative from the zoo suggested that the sides of the box-cages be covered with a tarpaulin during the ride uptown. We had just finished lashing this down when the chauffeur returned. Unaware of what his load consisted, he whistled merrily as he stepped on the starter. As the motor kicked over, angry growls emanated from the innocent-looking burden, and the whole truck began to shimmy with the force of the beasts' repeated lunges.

The driver grew pale. "So what is inside?" he asked, eyeing the load apprehensively. "Take a look for yourself," invited the keeper, nudging us. Lifting a corner of the canvas covering, the driver was about to look closer when a stubby yellow paw whipped through the bars, and two baleful eyes flamed in the dim recesses of the cage. "Tigers!" yelped the boy, backing away quickly. "You expect I should drive these wooden boxes filled with wild animals through the streets. Nothing doing. So where would I be if they busted out?"

We finally placated him, and he was cajoled into driving the car. I'll never forget the worried looks he stole back at the boxes every so often. The tigers were presented in due time, and the zoo got more than it bargained for, since one of the animals turned out to be a lady cat and presented the institution with a litter shortly after she registered. Commissioner Herrick has christened them Movietone and Metrotone, and if you ever visit the Park, look them up.

Then there was the time we were filming a flag presentation to the British Legion at Maidstone. The Duke of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury were officiating. The ceremony was staged in a sort of park and near by was a herd of grazing cattle. Just as the great church dignitary began the benediction, it started to rain. Imagine my consternation upon hearing the mournful moo of a desolate cow punctuating the solemn prayer. Before long the whole herd was mooing away and the noise nearly broke up the meeting. The picture certainly sounded funny in the projection room. Needless to say it could not be released.

Strange and diverse are the things newsreel people are asked to cover. During the recent marathon furor we filmed kids riding bikes for weeks, little girls seesawing indefinitely, and one pair of youngsters who had spent one thousand and eleven hours squatting up in a crab-apple tree on a New England farm. They were two ragged

Huckleberry Finns that descended to tearful but proud mothers, and even the mayor of the town turned out to meet them. Daffy a stunt as it was, I envied those kids their hour of triumph. I can appreciate such stunts where kids are concerned, but I could throttle those moronic individuals who go in for talking marathons, dancing marathons, and such, not to mention the pair of nuts who rolled ashcans all the way from Syracuse to Manhattan.

Will somebody tell me if the bird that started to fiddle and walk his way across the continent ever reached the coast? The last I saw of him we were shooting as he pulled away on a ferry boat for New Jersey; he was on the aft end, fiddling away a blue streak.

Another weird idea was the one suggested by a famous parachute jumper, now dead. He planned to strap a motorcycle engine and propeller to his chest, jump out of a plane with a parachute, start up the engine, and direct his descent to a predetermined spot. He was only surpassed by a soldier who volunteered to straddle a two-thousand-pound bomb on its way to earth. His idea was to pull the release ring of his chute when about halfway down or when the bomb had reached its terminal velocity, a mere eight miles a minute. Great gag, but I'd hate to see it attempted.

Though they cover such things when it is learned that they are about to take place, newsreels do not sponsor such stunts, nor willingly ask a person to perform them.

One of the most pathetic things I ever ran across was a Swedish carpenter's attempt to demonstrate the advantages of his new type of glider. It was a queer-looking contraption and bore out the builder's confession that he was absolutely ignorant of aërodynamic laws. It was exhibited at an upper New York State country club. The inventor would dash down a hillside with the awkward box-kite arrangement and attempt to glide over a small gully. Four times he made the run, lugging the unwieldy affair back to the start for another try. It was a waste of film. Seeing that we were preparing to pack up, he came over to us and with an apologetic smile said, "Boys, I've put sixty dollars in this glider and many hours of labour. I'm broke, but figure the publicity of getting in the newsreel would be worthwhile. Give me ten dollars and I'll crash it for you." We offered the ten spot if he would promise not to.

And here let me take the opportunity to express my admiration for the legion of newsreel widows who grin and bear it. A golf widow's lot is a perpetual tête-à-tête compared to that of the newsreel man's wife. Broken dinner engagements, nights of fear and wondering while their men work far away, sometimes out of communication. Hours of shop talk, not to mention tussles with the green-eyed monster when the husband writes home about pleasant hours with interesting steamer companions, or dances at smart resorts.

Sometimes, however, the newsreel man's wife accompanies him on his jaunts. One presented her husband with a baby girl in London. The baby was christened in New York six weeks later, and two months after that she was being lulled to sleep by a kindly old amah in Shanghai. In the two years of her life she has seen Hawaii, Panama, Cuba, and Canada, and seems none the worse for it.

One woman accompanied her husband along with her youngster up to far-north Trömsö and camped out with them in a pup tent while he was making shots of the midnight sun. Mrs. Charles Herbert tents out with her husband, and cooks the chow for the crew in the Arizona desert and such places. She is now, I believe, in Morocco.

CHAPTER II

Getting the News

CALVIN COOLIDGE is about the best movietone subject among public men in America. You can get him to do anything; his voice records splendidly; and people never tire of seeing him. He is always accommodating, and sometimes positively helpful. Once, when he was President, he was shooting clay pigeons down in Winchester, Virginia. A light rain had been falling all morning, and some of the cameramen, resorting to an old device, had stuffed handkerchiefs into the barrels of their lenses to keep the moisture out. The President made an unannounced appearance. Rushing up to him, the boys started to crank. He posed patiently enough for a few seconds, then started toward one of the cameras. Oh, boy! thought the newsreel man to himself, here's where I get a swell close-up of the old man! The President, however, halted about a pace from the camera, peered at it curiously, then plucked the handkerchief from the lens. "How do you expect to make pictures that way, young man?" asked the President, with his usual dry smile.

President Hoover is very human and sincere, but he finds it difficult to put over a speech. He can't speak six words without looking at his notes. You can't kid him in front of the mike. It is all a set performance or nothing.

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, on the other hand, is a natural subject for the film and mike; he always gives the glad hand to the men who shoot him, and is always a popular subject with the public.

John D. Rockefeller likes to make movietone interviews occasionally, and if he is in the right mood he becomes quite frisky, despite his age and his usual taciturnity. One time, after giving everyone present, including the camera crew, one of his shiny dimes, he fixed the camera with a pair of twinkling eyes and then shouted to the

microphone, "God bless Standard Oil!" That was once that direct advertising was left in a newsreel. It went over in a big way.

Al Smith is the newsreel man's delight. A great personality, a great voice, and the willingness to comply with any request, even if it is to don a raccoon coat in August! Jimmie Walker romps away with the honours as the screen's best extemporaneous speaker, and he is probably the wittiest performer before the microphone.

Lindbergh is heartily disliked by every cameraman and soundman in the business. Maybe his stand-offish attitude is due to natural modesty gone wrong, or maybe to one mean trick which was played on him once in St. Louis. He had refused all broadcast invitations and retired to his hotel room to rest. Someone—in reality a "plant" sent by a local radio company—was coming to talk with him "privately." But before the man got there Lindbergh discovered a microphone concealed behind the curtain. He threw it out of the window. The plot was an inexcusable intrusion on his privacy and a rare exception to his usual treatment. On more than one occasion the newsreel men have acceded to his request in regard to the elimination of this or that. He does not mind posing for pictures, but when a microphone is around he gets sore. He seems to have a phobia for the mike.

Many other aviators, however, including Captain Frank Hawks, Dr. Hugo von Eckener and Major Jimmie Doolittle, realize what it is for the cameraman to hang around a dreary airport for days in the rain, wet, or cold, waiting to get a shot of them at the end of some record-breaking flight. And they realize the importance of their help in preserving these events visually and audibly for history.

Among foreign public men the best performer is Mussolini. He can always be depended on to deliver a vigorous speech extemporaneously, and pictorially he is ideal. His English is bad, however, and speeches in our language are always rehearsed beforehand with a phonetic version as a prompter.

Most of the kings make good newsreel subjects. Alfonso, late of Spain, is the best. When he was King he was eager to talk for the newsreel in order to inject propaganda to attract tourists or commercial orders to Spain. But he has always been personally interested in the result. Once, at the Roehampton Country Club in England, he mentioned to us that he had never seen a newsreel of himself and

asked if he might see one. We said yes, and invited him to our projection rooms in London the following morning. He stipulated that he would come incognito and no one must be told of his coming. We promised. To our consternation we learned that the reel we had in mind was not in the London office, but we arranged to have a copy sent from Paris by airplane in time. We kept the secret of Alfonso's coming, except for telling our commissionaire. He kept the secret, except for telling the neighbouring doorman. So the secret was all over London, and a huge crowd had gathered when Alfonso stepped out of his sleek Hispano-Suiza. But he took it with his usual good-humour. Upon seeing and hearing himself on the screen, Alfonso was pleased as Punch. He had brought some friends along, and their comments upon his talkie début made him beam all the more, but he registered pleasure most when Ben Miggins, in charge of the London cameramen, said: "I'll tell you, Your Majesty, we like your stuff."

King George has made several voluntary interviews, but his doctor forbids him to stand bareheaded for any length of time. This interferes with an effective personality shot, for in the case of celebrities, people like to study the features of the speaker. The Prince of Wales is rather shy before the microphone, but he ranks as one of the most popular newsreel subjects. The Duke of York prefers to let his elder brother do the speech-making for the Royal Family.

King Victor Emmanuel of Italy insists that all film shots of him be made from a distance. It is said that he feels his short stature does not make him seem very imposing or regal on the screen.

Ramsay MacDonald is an all-round kindly man with his country's welfare at heart. He is known to newsreel men particularly as the first English cabinet minister to admit them to that Holy of Holies, the Cabinet Chamber at 10 Downing Street. That was on the eve of his departure for the disarmament conference in Geneva, and he realized the importance of impressing his message upon the entire world.

Lloyd George is a good subject, but he would rather tell the microphone about his ducks than about politics. Stanley Baldwin always delivers his messages in clear, graphic fashion, and Briand and Laval do an equally good job for France. President von Hindenburg of Germany is a poor speaker, no doubt owing to his age, and is most at ease before the camera when surrounded by children.

Mahatma Ghandi is a tough old bird. He thinks he is a pretty hot subject, but he is testy and cranky to deal with. He heartily detested the ordeal of being filmed at Borsad, India, and did everything to discourage the interview. When the boys finally pinned him down, he refused to move out where the light would be favourable and would not speak above a whisper. He was nailed only after a chase over half of India, through terrific heat and untold discomforts.

Strange to say, great business heads do not always make good subjects. Charles Schwab, Walter Gifford, and Owen D. Young are the exceptions. They radiate a something that makes the public pay undivided attention to what is being said. Henry Ford promises to be good, but he rarely speaks. Morgan is ever genial but always says, "Nothing to say, boys."

Some of the most amateur results upon the newsreel screen have been those of professional actors. Maybe it is because they have forgotten to be natural, for they certainly put on a terrible performance for news use. Although you might place them in the same profession, practically all musicians and band leaders do a good job of it. Rudy Vallée goes over with a bang, and so do Ted Weems and a score of others. Oh, yes, I forgot. There is one exception with reference to actors, though I don't suppose he can definitely be placed in that category. Will Rogers is sure fire on the screen.

Thomas Edison was the only inventor who ever did a really good performance for the movies. After all, he deservedly should. Orville Wright tries but loses his tongue.

In the world of letters and science there have been many men who have made brilliant talkies. For directness and excellent diction I think Nicholas Murray Butler heads the class. Plus this he possesses a ready smile and keen wit. Editors conceded that the late Sir Conan Doyle was the smoothest and pleasantest speaker they had ever heard on the screen, while lovable Sir James Barrie's voice was the poorest. Sir Oliver Lodge's efforts have always provoked enthusiastic applause.

George Bernard Shaw was a hard man to win over. Ever averse to movies, he resisted for a long time all solicitations to perform. It was only after he had witnessed a movietone of Mussolini that he agreed to pose and then he insisted upon directing the making of

the subject. "I can do better than he," was his characteristic observation concerning Il Duce's film. He made the subject at his cottage in Codicote, England, and after seeing his speaking likeness in the projection room later, he cried, "Wonderful! You may release that to the entire world." Since then he has made several subjects, and they have all been great.

Athletes and members of the sporting fraternity are not all good subjects but their great popularity generally carries them through. Bill Tilden leads for tennis, Eleanor Smith for the women flyers, and Gar Wood for aquatic speed events. Georgia Coleman gets a hand from diving enthusiasts, and Bobby Jones always scores high. Among women golfers, Helen Hicks goes over best. Glenna Collett fails to impress; she never seems sincere in her delivery, due no doubt to the fact that she treats the matter lightly when making a picture. If Gene Tunney would forget himself and act natural I am sure he would make a great subject. Baseball players, jockeys, and football coaches all seem to have a hard time of it when placed before the camera.

Clergymen do a good job for the talkies, but it is the evangelists who lead the celluloid parade in the ecclesiastical division. Billy Sunday dominates the screen with his forceful delivery, and you can always depend upon Aimee Semple McPherson to wow them when she rolls her eyes heavenwards.

Columnists are always agreeable when asked to perform, but they never seem very witty. Maybe it is because we have to get them out of business hours. The good ones never get up before dark. Heywood Broun's traditional baggy pants look twice as bad under the camera's cruel eye, and a close-up of his face always makes a man run a calculating hand over his own beard. Walter Winchell has a good recording voice and can put over a gag. Mark Hellinger gets close to the people out front and seems to enjoy the business of making movies.

Artists of all sorts, be they brush, pen, or tool workers, are top-notch actors. That goes for cartoonists too. Some of the best subjects ever made have been contributed by Jo Davidson, Gutzon Borglum, and men of their calibre. George MacManus and Peter Arno, among the humourists, have done well.

Newspaper publishers furnish a few interesting characters. Adolph Ochs and Arthur Brisbane can always hold interest when commenting on news of the day, and they easily take the honours in their class.

Radio announcers, as a whole, are better heard than seen. (I hope I don't lose any of my friends of that vocation.)

Children are by far the most casual performers before the camera, but great he-men shiver when asked to speak up.

All the officers of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps can be counted upon to make excellent movietone speeches; they usually possess good voices and reflect sincerity in their words. General Smedley Butler wins first prize. He speaks with spontaneity and directness. General Pershing has been known to become a bit testy when interviewed, though at most times he is the essence of good nature. Commander Byrd has the news equivalent of It.

Newsreel men who photograph Emperor Hirohito of Japan must wear formal afternoon dress with cutaway and striped trousers, and must back away bowing from his presence. Hirohito is the only man in the world (excepting the Pope, who has not yet been recorded in sound) who demands this. The picture of Japanese photographers dressed up to photograph his majesty has been itself made the subject of a newsreel.

The Kaiser, the Pope, and Stalin are the only public personages in the world who have not yet been personally interviewed by the sound newsreel. (Stalin, however, has been seen in pictures made by Russian companies.) Soviet Russia is the only country into which American newsreel men have not yet ventured. This is because of the problematical danger of confiscation of their equipment, which would mean a loss of \$35,000.

The really big figures in the world's limelight are generally easier to deal with than the small-timers, who feel their self-importance too acutely. I ran across one such person—an insignificant nominee on a suburban ticket—who gave us more trouble than a king. He could not understand why we asked him to condense his half-hour message to the people to two minutes. "How," he stormed, "could you expect me, a busy man, to grant you an interview under such conditions?" We didn't. We packed up.

A good many prominent men have their obituaries in the newsreels. But the only ones that have been released so far are those of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Thomas Lipton.

As might be expected, cameramen have their pet aversions. They seem to agree that animal shows, birds, publicity stunts, polo, and people who persist in shifting from one foot to the other while being photographed in close-up, are the main reasons for headaches. Sound men grit their teeth when confronted with lisps, whiners, juice-suckers, and such. Carillons, ten-ton dynamite explosions, traffic noises, and gusty winds add to their woes. In the majority of cases the average man or woman records well, and no one should feel apprehensive about standing up to a microphone. But deliver me from the timid soul who protests that he or she cannot speak a little louder.

Ten to one you don't know the names of the men who invented (or rather made practicable) the sound newsreel recording on film. They were Theodore Case and Earl I. Sponable, engineers attached to the Case Research Laboratories in Auburn, New York. Both men had dabbled with photo recording for years. The year 1925 saw a workable system in action, and the two men piled their apparatus in the back of an old Studebaker for a trip to Washington where a talkie of President Coolidge and Senator LaFollette was made. Case and Sponable gave a professional showing of the new sound on film system; but the old silent cameramen couldn't see it. William Fox was the only man at the time to get behind it in earnest. Many things had to be ironed out; but the new type of news film was finally launched in 1927. Getting an organization together to exploit the invention was a hard job. The new men—sound men, they were called—were mostly recruited from the radio field. Accustomed to the deliberate atmosphere of the scientific laboratory, they could not grasp the need for speed in shooting a picture. This tardiness resulted in frequent altercations between the members of a crew. While a cameraman would impatiently tap his foot as his partner calmly went about selecting a good mike placement, the cream of the story was often lost. This, together with the fact that microphones were generally placed in the picture, drove the cameraman nuts. His sense of art and composition was outraged. On the other hand, if the cameraman should

set the mike to one side, the sloppy reception would rouse the ire of the sound man. Then the fun would commence. Crews would come back to the office sporting black eyes or skinned knuckles, mute testimony to some disputed point.

To Ben Miggins, veteran cameraman of Fox News, fell the job of handling the first news outfit. It was a dainty little affair weighing fifteen hundred pounds and requiring the services of three husky men and a two-ton truck to transport it. Ben sprouted a few gray hairs the day he turned in his compact Akeley silent camera, which had served him from Hollywood to the Nile, for the mass of wires, tubes, and panels known as Field Outfit Number One. Nevertheless, he has been a convinced champion of the system ever since.

That was four years ago and the first edition of the new venture contained but three subjects. The outstanding one was a review at West Point, and the usual snappy drill of the cadets was further enhanced by the stirring strains of the Academy's band. That was a great year for news. Lindbergh spanned the Atlantic in his *Spirit of St. Louis*; the old Conowingo Bridge was blown up; national political conventions were under way, and for the first time voters, no matter where they lived, were able to see and hear their campaign favourites. Who can deny that a better understanding of the character of candidates was conveyed to the public?

It was not long before the recording system was condensed to a fairly portable size; then the reel began to expand. Europe was invaded by Miggins, and soon a steady stream of history-making subjects poured from his busy camera. There were Mussolini, George Bernard Shaw, Alfonso, and others: a mighty parade of celluloid that thrilled the world. Crews scampered over the States continuously. The outfits were few, but the territory was covered. It was not unusual to drive from New York to Atlanta for a story. In the old silent days a free-lance resident would have sent in the material, but sound equipment cost too much for an individual to tackle.

The utmost effort is made to get the finished product on the screen with the minimum delay, especially when rival companies are filming big events. The outstanding example of this is the chartered train that brought to New York the film of Lindbergh's reception after his return from Paris in the summer of 1927. The ceremony ended about

1 P. M., and the train waited on a siding of Union Station for the film to be delivered. It was composed of three cars: the first a complete developing laboratory; the second a projection room; and the third an editorial office. The films were delivered at 1:14, and the train instantly got under way for New York. In the first car the thousands of feet of film were put "in the soup" to develop. Then they were fixed in the hypo bath and washed in water "laced" with alcohol to make them dry immediately. By the time the train was rushing on a clear track through the city of Baltimore the negative had been received by the second car, the projection room. Here it was run through on the screen (as negative) and edited down to 500 feet. Instructions were passed back to the third car, which began setting up the titles in white cardboard letters on a black field, and photographing them. Meanwhile the positives were being made and developed in the first car. By the time the train had reached Philadelphia six positives had been completed and dried. And when it rolled into Pennsylvania Station in New York at 4:21 (having completed the 226 miles in the record-breaking time of 187 minutes) six films of the event were ready to be delivered by waiting motors to the largest movie theatres on Broadway. They were seen by the public before five o'clock, less than four hours after the event. It was a scoop over all competitors. The other companies had chartered planes to fly the negative up to New York; but developing, editing, and titling in the usual manner could not compete with the speed shown on the rolling laboratory. The psychology of the situation itself probably pepped the men up to do their utmost.

To-day there are over fifty news crews operating throughout the world. The original American organization has expanded into a world-wide network. The American system virtually controls the field, the more so because European public men usually make an American showing a condition of giving interviews. Six distributing centres are maintained in the key cities of the world, each with complete editorial staffs, namely, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and Sydney. Assignments to news crews are made by each one, either for local or for world distribution. Each one sends, by the fastest steamer or express train, negative of all its important subjects to the other five, which edit and title them for their several territories, to conform with local prejudices or preferences. For this purpose a

staff of editors and linguists is always on hand. In Italy, however, the reel is edited under the eyes of local authorities, Mussolini personally being interested in what is shown. In Mexico a censor always travels with the news crew to designate just what can or cannot be filmed.

CHAPTER III

The Newsreel Public

WHAT the public wants in newsreels is something the editor has to guess at, or rather “smell” with his news sense. World-wide release makes newsreel editing a monumental job. What is one man’s meat is another man’s poison. The editors on one occasion had a picture of a poor devil who had been tossed out of a glider. His writhing body could be seen very plainly as it hurtled to earth, and even the dull thud as it hit could be distinctly heard. The problem was just how to cut the gruesome thing. Some argued that it should end just as the pilot was catapulted from his seat; others felt that a few feet showing the descent of the body would lend suspense to the subject. It was assembled accordingly, and the regular office staff of stenographers was invited into the projection room to see the negative. They did not know what they were going to witness; the editors planned to watch their faces for reactions, that the picture might be cut to be effective yet not too horrible. During the showing, a healthy, strapping girl fainted, and several screamed. But imagine the editors’ feelings when a dainty little steno rolled her big blue eyes and cooed: “Oooooooh, that was exciting, but why didn’t they show the man hitting?”

But in general what the public wants is—more or less in order of preference as indicated by theatre managers’ reports—the following: Spectacular accidents; catastrophes such as fires and earthquakes; personality shots; racing of all kinds (horses, especially in steeplechases, are more interesting than motor cars, because the danger of spills is greater); battleships; children (babies preferred); sex—for example, bathing-beauty contests, fashion shows, night-club shows, and the like; events with a morbid interest, such as murderers’ confessions; football, aviation, and skiing; animals, particularly polar

bears and monkeys (there is a flock of simians in a Milwaukee park which is good for two shots a year. People love to watch Jocko scramble about, and many seem surprised that he likes to swim, and voluntarily dives from high perches).

Children, as I have said, are among the best subjects. They are in almost every case "naturals" and can generally be counted on to bring laughs. One of the best instances of this was a film made at an East Side Settlement House during one Christmas season. Al Smith, always good for a natural himself, was presenting gifts to each little boy and girl as they filed past him. One youngster, obviously of Hebraic extraction, stepped forward and extended his palm nonchalantly. "Well, my little man," asked Al, smiling benignly, "what do you expect from Santa Claus?" The boy looked up at the Governor and answered in a matter-of-fact tone, "Ten dollars." Smith looked dumbfounded for a moment, then catching himself he managed to stammer, "But what in the world are you going to do with all that money?" . . . "Buy goldfishes," was the boy's answer. That picture was a wow.

The differences of national preferences and prejudices are tricky and keep editors awake nights. For instance, a certain theatre in Poland was bombed because a German newsreel was shown there. Hoover may be popular in France one week, and unpopular the next, and the American opinion of foreign public men may change from day to day. The crowd in any given locality is made up of many individuals, and its opinions shift as rapidly as the wind.

With reference to the performance of various nationalities and races before the camera and microphone, opinions are pretty well agreed. To the Italians goes the palm for being the world's fastest talkers, while Laplanders are the slowest, with the other Scandinavian countries following closely. Germans and Austrians speak a little faster than their neighbours to the north, and the English-speaking countries strike a happy medium between the two extremes. In the Orient one finds the Japanese the high-speed orators, with their Chinese cousins delivering in measured, colourless tones. Siamese are the East's most profound speakers, while Burmese are the most dissonant. Hindus, as a rule, do not fancy being photographed, and the lower-caste Indian will flee from the very sight of a camera.

Arabian countries are consistently good. German and Swiss choral societies always make fine records, but the most beautiful record of the human voice I ever heard was that of a group of untrained Maoris singing a native song. I would rather hear *Alekoki* played by four Hawaiians than Toscanini doing *Faust*. That of course is personal, but I'm sure that every listener would agree that the Japanese scale of five notes is responsible for some pretty terrible music. I feel sorry for the editors when they have to listen to a thousand feet of geisha music. Savage chants seem to appeal to the public, and they always are good material, be they from some remote spot or from Harlem. And, by the way, Negro men, be they savage or civilized, are quite at ease when being filmed, and become quite voluble before the mike, but their women never seem to be able to do anything but giggle when asked to say a few kind words.

CHAPTER IV

Shooting the Foreign Legion

THE Foreign Legion! What magic that name stands for. Romance, thrills, tradition, and iron discipline. Many novels have been written about it, but rarely have the stories adhered to the stark facts that really exist. This is a true yarn from the lips of one who has lived with the Légionnaires. Tommy Bills had been sent to Europe by our outfit to show the Continentals some fancy sound recording. Working out of the Paris office as he did, he spent most of his time in racing from century-old pageants in Belgium to bullfights in Spain. His camera partner was a Frenchman, and after two years Tommy could have passed for one himself, what with his beret, perfect French, and preference for Château Yquem.

"Pierre Luck and myself," Tommy explained, "had been languishing in Sevilla waiting for the Spanish revolution to get under way. We knew it would only be a matter of days. While waiting, I blued in a couple of new sound slits to clear that new super-sensitive stock we're using nowadays, and Luck fussed around his camera replacing the take-up belt and adjusting the tachometer for accuracy. We hung around the Hotel Cristina most of the time, and it was while we were lounging around one morning that a page boy knocked at the door with the information that the long distance telephone required Señor Luck's immediate attention. We both raced downstairs, figuring it was a call from the Paris office. It was, and after going through the usual facial contortions and gesticulations a Frenchman considers necessary to a telephone conversation, my partner informed me that we were to be on the move.

"In the privacy of our room he told me that M. Maginot, the Minister of War, had given official permission for a crew to photograph the activities of the Legion. We would have to leave at once. Luck

was enthusiastic about the assignment. So was I. We hurried through breakfast, checked the car for petrol and oil, picked up some maps, and by noon we were motoring to Málaga, the point of embarkation for Africa. It's not much of a drive from Sevilla, so we took it easy, arriving in time for a leisurely supper before going aboard the twenty-three o'clock boat for Melilla, Spanish Morocco. Luck turned in immediately upon embarking, but I stayed on deck. You know how it is. The thoughts of the great adventure ahead, plus a constant mental review of all the things I had read about Algeria, had banished all thoughts of sleep from me. Something of the night's witchery held me fascinated too. The indigo sky fairly shimmered with the multitude of stars, and a warm, languid breeze blew from Africa. I visualized burnoosed silhouettes slumped forward on dromedaries; solitary figures against the vast purple background of a dying day's desert splendour. Silly, wasn't it? Yet there were others who seemed to be in the grip of that mysterious unseen force. I watched a Legion officer returning to his post. By the feeble glow of his cigarette I could see the glint of his hawklike eyes, and they never for an instant wavered from the south. Another passenger, a woman, whose flamboyant glances earlier in the evening had proclaimed her profession, now gazed silently over the rail with chin cupped in palms, manifesting a certain uneasiness. After all, it is a long cry from the pavements of Montmartre to the human pot-pourri of an Algerian dive. It is hard to imagine the transition from modern civilization that takes place in that brief voyage across the Mediterranean. You can discount, if you wish, the nocturnal whisperings I just mentioned, but the fact remains that the land of the Moslem is far removed from our standards.

"We glided into the colourful port of Melilla at dawn. Native beggars swarmed forward, extending avaricious hands from the folds of their flowing garments, beseeching alms in a medley of whining voices. Packs of mangy dogs sniffed curiously at our boots. After the truck was swung off the ship, we proceeded to the custom house, where we went through the formalities of passport inspection and the clearance of our equipment. An American (he was a writer who had just come out of the interior) suggested that I keep my nationality a secret. 'Once they learn you are a Yank,' he warned, 'they will rob

you right and left. The merest trifle will have a preposterous charge attached to it.' I thanked him and told him that it had been my intention all along to pretend I was French.

"After some further directions concerning our route, we started off on the three hundred and fifty kilometer drive to Sidi-bel-Abbès, Algeria, where we were to join the First Regiment of the Legion. Sidi-bel is also the training garrison for recruits. The border crossing was made without any fuss and after a two-day drive over terrible roads and through the almost unendurable heat, we purred down the Avenue Emile Loubet which is the main street of Sidi-bel-Abbès.

"Wanting to have everything in good shape before we tackled our job, we cleaned the camera and other equipment thoroughly, for we had begun to realize that we would have to work under unusual conditions. Sand had penetrated the very innards of the apparatus, and you know what that means. A grain of sand could ruin delicate parts, not to mention the abrasions the film would suffer. There would be no second chance to make the subject.

"That evening, after a meal that made us wonder if we were going to enjoy the expedition as much as we had expected, we strolled around the town, going home with the firm conviction that all the nice things we had read about Sidi-bel-Abbès must have been gleaned from the same sources a Broadway song writer consults when he composes flowery lyrics about Dixie. What a sorry place! We counted two second-rate hotels, four fairly decent cafés, and a mosque; but the rest of the town appeared to be made up of filthy little native cafés, Nubian vice resorts, and odorous alleys jammed with meat stalls.

"The next morning we drove over to the Legion Barracks to pay our respects to the commandant. He was affable and informed us that we were just in time to film the ceremony of the unveiling of a monument commemorating the centenary of the Legion's founding. Crossing to a window, he indicated a draped monument standing in the centre of the barracks' quadrangle; it represented the four phases of the Legion's development since eighteen thirty-one, when the first troops set forth to uphold France's dominion in North Africa. The officer also proffered the information that we would probably encounter a certain amount of resistance on the part of the enlisted men when they learned that we intended to photograph them. As you

know, a man's past is a closed chapter within the Legion's ranks, and many insist on keeping their whereabouts unknown.

"Permission was granted to set up in the courtyard, and while doing so we happened to witness one of the penalties meted out for a minor delinquency. One poor fellow, stripped to the waist, pacing up and down directly in the angry glare of the midday sun, was carrying a jagged rock, weighing about fifty pounds, upon his back. It was adjusted by leather straps in such a fiendish way that every time he would squirm to ease the pressure, it would lacerate his skin all the more. Huge flies sucked at the bloody cuts, and whenever the soldier showed signs of faltering, his guard would help along the agony with a vicious jab of his bayonet. In another corner a tough drill sergeant was braying orders at a squad of awkward recruits. Wearing full marching packs of sixty pounds, and shouldering heavy rifles, they were put through squad manoeuvres and the manual of arms regardless of their sufferings. It was all new to them, and, unaccustomed to the heat and burden, they sometimes staggered; but *mon sergent* did not relent one whit. He never for a moment let them forget that they were 'stupid dolts, swine not even fit to be designated as Soldiers of the Second Class.' And if they showed resentment they received a blow for their pains. Oh, the Legion makes you tough.

"When the regiment assembled for the unveiling, however, we forgot some of its seamy side. I know I for one began to realize why so many of the men reënlist for another five years of hell at twenty-five centimes or a penny a day. Drawn up in rigid khaki rows, they presented a thrilling picture as the 'Marseillaise' blared forth from the regimental band. Not a blue sash was out of line, not a képi tilted one fraction off centre, and the fixed bayonets never quivered, so still did they stand.

"A dead silence followed the national anthem; then, through my ear phones, I heard the clang of a sabre as an officer saluted. A deep, brazen harmony rent the air, followed by the hollow clatter of many hoofs; it was the native unit of Spahis entering the courtyard, led by their splendid bugle corps. These troops are native Arabs, and they keep the burnoose and flowing robe as part of their uniform. Their mounts are the finest specimens of horseflesh bred in any

Arabian country. Following their intricate cavalry drill, the Légionnaires put on a review that revealed the precision of their splendid military training. As they passed us, I could see the glances of resentment they shot our way. It was not until later that we learned from the men themselves that they had cooked up a plan to wreck our outfit at the first opportunity.

"While parked in front of the Metropole, after the review, tinkering over the truck's motor, we happened to overhear some of the wisecracks passed by a group of Légionnaires that loitered near by. It was evident from their remarks that our presence was resented. This discouraged us, as we had counted on the men to help us show their side of the Legion's life. After discussing the problem, we decided to grab the bull by the horns.

"The best café in town is the Continental, so, figuring that we might make the acquaintance of some Légionnaire there, we dropped into the place for a drink. Anisette is the men's favourite liquor, and seeing a group sitting with empty glasses before them, I invited all to join me in another. They regarded me surlily for a moment, then continued their conversation, ignoring me completely; the crowning insult, however, was to switch their talk from French to German. This seemed quite unwarranted to me, and not caring a damn for the results of my tirade, I let loose with a string of good old-fashioned Americanese. At the outburst, a tall, blonde Légionnaire, wearing the chevrons of a sergeant and sitting at another table, fastened me with his chilly eyes. For a moment I thought I was going to have a scrap on my hands, but relaxing his features into a friendly grin, he addressed me in English, speaking in a pleasant drawl.

"'Thought you weren't really a blinkin' frog,' he observed, raising a match to his cigarette indolently and staring at me with one quizzical eye.

"'Thank God someone is civil enough to speak,' I snorted, then: 'British?'

"'Righto. And you're a Yank, or I never fought beside you chaps in 'seventeen.' He got up and lounged over to me. He seemed glad of the opportunity to speak in his native tongue, and after accepting my invitation to have a drink, he dropped into the chair beside me, unbuckling his garrison belt with a casual flip. 'What made you say

I wasn't a frog?" I asked. 'Just a little detail,' he said. 'Something that you probably never thought of.'

"What?"

"Round-toed shoes. No Frenchman ever wears 'em."

"I looked down. Sure enough, I was wearing a pair that I'd bought in New York years before. They were old, and I'd taken them along thinking they would be comfortable in hot weather.

"I beckoned to Pierre, who was moping over his Cointreau at the bar, and introduced him to the Englishman, who merely said he was 'Carey.' We got to know each other well that evening, and our new friend enlightened us considerably as to why the men were averse to being photographed. It was not so much a case of fearing detection as fugitives from justice, for there really is but a small percentage of outright criminals in the ranks. It is family and personal complications that make them want to lose themselves forever. Carey had left home because of a fracas at Oxford some years before, he confessed, and was now serving his third term of enlistment at a fairly decent pay. It increases with service.

"Acting upon Carey's suggestion, we stocked up with a supply of the soldier's favourite cigarettes, Gauloise de Bleu, and made arrangements for several barrels of Algerian wine to supplement their regular commissary stock, which permits the issue of one quarter litre per man a day. Within a couple of days we noted a change in the men's demeanour toward us, and after a fortnight around the barracks we were on speaking terms with most of them. While taking pictures, we respected a man's wishes if he preferred not to be made in close-up, and it was probably this that did most in cementing relations. The men posed for squad drills and off-duty scenes willingly; going so far as to stage intimate groups sitting around tables, drinking anise, and carrying on conversations in their native tongues. It was at this time that we learned a strange fact. Germans make up about fifty per cent of the Legion, with Italians, Czechs, and Frenchmen following; contrary to popular belief, there are but few Englishmen or Americans in the ranks. As a matter of fact, we did not meet a single Yank in Sidi-bel-Abbès, but were told that several could be found at the outside garrisons.

"Our next job called for the making of pictures at one of these out-

side posts, and upon inquiring we learned that the one situated at Gerryville, three hundred-odd kilometres south, would give us the material we desired. The trip from the coast to Sidi-bel-Abbès had been a cinch compared to our new route. The roads were mere ruts, and the deadly hot atmosphere sapped every ounce of vitality from one in a few hours. We passed squads of prisoners making new road beds or laying railroad ties. Their sufferings must have been terrible, for the torturing rays of the sun beat down with a withering blast that seemed unbearable. Once or twice I thought even old Betsy would give up the ghost: she laboured and coughed in protest at the double strain of heat and deep sand that had drifted over the so-called highway.

"Gerryville proved to be a stockaded garrison commanded by a captain whose acquaintance we had made back at the First Regiment's Headquarters. This helped a great deal, for he had passed along the word to help us, and assured the men that we were not snoops. It was quite evident that the men attached to the post represented a different element than those we had been in contact with at Sidi-bel. They were harder, and their faces reflected the philosophy one hears on all sides when in the company of *Légionnaires*: 'Live to-day, for you may be dead to-morrow.' They know that a man rarely outlives his enlistment when kept at the outposts; skirmishes are too frequent. A detachment entered the courtyard one afternoon after having completed a sortie into the Sahara. Browed to a degree acquired only by constant exposure to the desert's fiery heat, whiskers caked from constant mixture of sand and sweat, they certainly looked like tough *hombres* when they swung into the garrison.

"The captain, in answer to our question as to when we would be able to accompany one of the desert patrols, told us that a punitive expedition was to start as soon as he received the official O. K. With a view to using it as an introduction, we had him make a talkie explaining the reason for these sorties. It seems that Algeria is overrun with nomads who do not understand why they should pay tribute to the government. They base their refusal on the fact that they do not own property, owe no fealty, and feel that France is an interloper anyway. The outcome is invariably the same thing, bloodshed.

"The O. K. arrived a couple of days later, and we set out with a

detail that was to patrol the area west of Gerryville. We felt like suckers riding in the comparative comfort of a car while they plodded along with full marching pack augmented by machine guns and tent supplies. They ticked off twenty to thirty kilometres a day and did it without a whimper. They seemed to possess a certain fierce pride in proving their stamina. We had a unit of Spahis along, and whenever one would ride within hailing distance of the marchers he was the target of ribald abuse, criticizing his ability to carry on without a horse. Some of the men, because of swollen feet, discarded their shoes to continue barefooted, oblivious of burning sands and the myriad of insects that swarmed about. No matter how bloody or torn their feet became, they continued. They know that to fall by the wayside means death, for no one will drop back to aid them, and if exposure or thirst does not do the trick, a swift knife-thrust, driven with all the fury of Moslem hatred, will. Onward they marched, singing racy songs that were a shade too strong for the microphone.

"Wanting to get some angles as the men approached, we went ahead of the column with a guide to set up at the day's final bivouac; it was a sorry little oasis presided over by a couple of straggly date palms in a spot that was hilly and ridged with sand dunes that obscured the marchers as they neared us. Long before they appeared we could hear the thump of drums and see the low-hanging pall of dust that hovered over the marchers.

"We began shooting as the head of the column uncoiled from the dunes. It made an excellent long shot and truly portrayed the spirit of the men. In answer to our handkerchief signal that we were shooting, the mounted officer leading the procession shouted a command. It was for the Legion's *coup de théâtre*. With a graceful flourish, trumpets were raised to lips, and a rousing marching song blared across the sands. Watching the needle of my volume indicator oscillate as it reacted to the familiar double beat and roll that all French drummers affect, I thought how much more effective the scene was with the addition of natural sound. There was a world of meaning in that steady, monotonous rhythm. Left, right. Left, right, they swung; hot, tired, dirty, yet ever alert for the hawklike swoop of some ambushed nomad band. All for a penny a day!

"We planned to round out our story with the activities at that

encampment, so we kept on grinding as the men went about their chores. Tents were pitched with a deftness that bespoke long practice; every movement was mechanical and methodical. Rifles were stacked, képis discarded, and horses watered. Inhuman as it may seem, yet based upon sound logic, is the fact that no foot soldier may quench his thirst before the above details are attended to. A certain time must elapse lest in their eagerness they gulp down the water to their own detriment. The corporal of each squad gathers up his men's canteens and replenishes them; they are placed together, and at a given signal the men may drink.

"We were trying to enjoy our supper of thick soup and alleged coffee when the sharp crack of a rifle echoed from a group of sand dunes some three hundred meters distant. It was an ambush! One of the officers snapped out an order, but he had scarcely completed the command before the men had whipped into action. Dropping to their bellies or dragging machine guns after them, they deployed over the open area. Guerrilla warfare was nothing new to them. Gone was the fatigue of a few moments before. This was their meat. We ducked to one side of the truck, transferred the camera to a baby tripod, and waited. A skulking, berobed form was outlined against the sky for a second, and at the same time the staccato rataplan of a mitrailleuse stabbed the air with its song of death. The bullets found their mark, for with a shrill scream to Allah the desert bandit plunged face first and lay still.

"That was the cue for the attack, and a swarm of shrieking, bur-noosed demons came rushing over the ridge; they brandished long curved swords, and some carried rifles. A squad of Légionnaires dropped beside us, unlimbered their Lebel rifles, and began shooting. They fired with the casual detachment they might have displayed in a shooting gallery. By this time, our Spahis, who had detoured from the route during the day's march, descended upon the scene with the fury of a tornado. Shooting from the hip and shouting like madmen, they raced straight for the attackers. It was all over right then, for the Riffs retreated pell-mell with the Spahis in hot pursuit. When the Colonials returned, I gathered from their fierce mutterings that a few more bandits had gone to meet their venerable fathers. Save for one Légionnaire, who had suffered a scalp wound from a ricocheting

bullet, no one in the French outfit was hurt; three of the bandits lay dead within the camp. That was all there was to it. *C'est la guerre!* A trifling deviation from the day's regular routine.

"That evening we made some silhouette stuff around the camp fires as the soldiers sang their regimental songs; it was our last night with the men, and we produced a cask of wine from the truck, bidding the men step up for their share. There was a method in our madness, for we wanted to get them worked up completely. Before the night was over we had them doing jigs, and as a final fadeout to our little production we had them give a rousing *Vive la Légion!*

"Our guide awakened us early for the start of the trip back to headquarters. Gerryville harboured us the first night, and on the third day we were back in Sidi-bel-Abbès. Strange what a different slant I had developed toward that town. It was easy to see why a Légionnaire might consider it quite a place. Compared to the desert it was a metropolis.

"We said our farewells to the boys, and Carey, the Englishman whose only other tag seemed to be Sergeant 86,455, was the last to grip our hands. There was a bit of a choke in his voice as he spoke. 'I say, fellows,' he began, 'if you should happen to drop over London Town way, drop me a line, will you?'

"We promised silently. I can see him yet, standing in the middle of the road, waving as we dusted along."

CHAPTER V

Hunting Whales off Kamchatka

MOVIEZONE crews are spotted in the key cities of the world. But sometimes, when an unusually important event is to occur, it becomes necessary to rush extra outfits to the particular location. Naturally, the resident crew welcomes these periodic visits. Such was the case during the celebration attending the nuptials of Emperor Hirohito's brother in Tokyo. We had made a flying trip to Japan for the event; Ariel Vargas and Paul Heise, our staff representatives in Nippon, greeted us when we stepped off the *Asama Maru* at Yokohama. A short rickshaw ride through the Benton-dori to the terminal, and a swift ride on the electric up to Tokyo terminated our travels, and soon we were dallying over cocktails in the exquisite lobby of the Imperial Hotel.

The boys were naturally interested in gossip from the home office and what sort of a reception their pictures were getting.

"You know," began Heise, "we rarely hear much comment concerning our stuff. Sometimes it gets your nanny. You work like a slave on a story and wonder if they like it or not, but nary a word comes through."

"Well, I know one thing," assured my partner, "they liked the stuff from Formosa, and the whale hunt off Kamchatka was a classic!"

"Plenty of grief on that last one," remarked Heise, shaking his head dolefully.

"How come?" I asked.

"Well," answered Vargas, "it was a tough trip up to the place where we were to board the whaling ship. The Toyo Hoge Company—that's the only whaling outfit in the Orient—invited us to make pictures of their industry up at Toshimo. They advised getting into the district about August, that being the best month for results. That is the season when whales shove off from their hatching ground and

migrate toward Kamchatka Peninsula. Our first step was to drive to Aomori, the most northerly port of any consequence on Honshu; then we chartered a big transport plane for the flight to Fukuyama on Hokkaido Island. From that point conveniences are few and far between. So it was horses for transportation. The next six days we did only ten miles a day over the mountains. Three weeks after our start we reached the shores of Furefo Bay, where a small sampan waited to carry us through the Sea of Okhotsk to Toshimo. We reached the whaling station to find it in full swing; several boats had returned from the whaling grounds with big catches.

"We shot a lot of footage on the more commercial side of the industry, figuring it would make good stuff leading up to the actual hunt. The Japanese hunt whales primarily for their meat. It is a palatable food, something like venison, and has no traces of fish flavour about it. The meat is cut and packed to be shipped throughout the Empire. Some is iced, and the rest is canned, depending on the destination. Oil, whalebone, or baleen, and a sort of leather are by-products of the industry. There were lots of shots for us around the slaughter houses."

"And did it smell?" I suggested.

"It did," said Ariel with emphasis. After a moment of olfactory reminiscence he continued:

"We moved in for angles of the butchers. They were naked, except for the loin clout. They carved the huge carcasses into chunks weighing about one hundred pounds each. They chattered away continuously in a patois half Japanese and half Russian, and as they clambered over the whales, sawing and slicing with long double-edged knives, they had the look of a swarm of monkeys. The women took care of the disposal of the viscera. Over two hundred feet of intestine can be obtained from one whale, and this makes an excellent leather substitute. I happened to catch a shot of a tiny girl wrestling with a cumbersome piece of entrail. Hacking away in great style, she gossiped and bantered with her neighbours; suddenly, while struggling with the flabby hunk of tissue, she happened to slip face first into the slimy mess of blood and gristle. Picking herself up, she unconcernedly brushed the gore from her nose, grinned at her companions, and went back to work.

"Over at another part of the plant we made close-ups of the methods used in procuring oil from the sperm or cachalot whale. The oil (they call it spermaceti in the business) is held in a sort of reservoir occupying two thirds of the cetacean's head. It is drained off, barrelled, and shipped to refineries, where it is clarified into a super-lubricant for use on precision machinery. As a matter of fact, it is excellent for camera use.

"Results were all right so far. Then we said we wanted to go to sea with one of the whalers to make the first actual sound pictures of a whale hunt. Our host, who was also the manager of the station, made every polite effort to dissuade us. 'Merican-san would find it of much difficult and unhampy convenience to sail on honolable ship,' he protested, in a well intentioned warning. He soon realized our determination to sail, however, so with much hissing and tongue clucking he made arrangements for a trip aboard the *Ganjitsu Maru*, flagship of the fleet. It was a trim little steam vessel patterned after the modern Norwegian whalers. With true Japanese courtesy, the skipper turned over his quarters to us, shifting his duffle and personal *tatomi* mats into some other part of the ship.

"Shortly after we embarked, the anchor was weighed, and soon we could feel the steady rise and fall of the vessel as it ploughed through the North Pacific. I've sailed some rough seas, but those wastes off Kamchatka take the cake. It must be where all those Japanese typhoons originate. For sixteen days we pitched and wallowed without sighting anything but big seas, scudding clouds, and heavy fogs. It was August, but it was plenty cold. Whales don't often come below the fiftieth parallel, and in that latitude you frequently pass through areas of slush ice or even growlers. We felt sorry for the members of the crew as they squatted around the decks, mending cordage or repairing other gear while we, in the warm comfort of the wheel house, checked over our apparatus. Our course was a composite one, embracing hundreds of square miles. It was somewhere off the tip of the Aleuts that our skipper advised us to get ready.

"The deck head of the pilot house offered a firm platform for my tripod, and after lashing the legs securely to stanchions, I helped Paul shift his gear to the same location. Microphone placement gave us quite a bit of trouble as the incessant wind raised constant hell

with the diaphragm. A wind like that causes a continuous series of clicks in the record. The bosun's mate came to our rescue by rigging up a sort of screen abaft the foremast; it was made up of several layers of Fuji silk. Everything now to our satisfaction, we stood by for developments.

"Some four hundred yards to port I caught the spout of the whale. His giant body was just awash, lying in a long undulating line. With a flick of its flukes it dove, then reappeared dead ahead for another blow. The column of water shot a good thirty feet skywards and we could hear its swish as it fell.

"The engine-room telegraph jangled for half speed, and we began to stalk the unsuspecting creature. I flipped a wide-angled lens in position and pressed the button. The decks of the whaler swarmed with sturdy brown men as they scurried to their respective positions. Up forward, feet braced to counteract the pitch of the bow, the harpooner prepared for business. He snapped out orders and adjusted his Svend Foyn harpoon gun. This weapon fires a six-foot dart, weighing one hundred and ten pounds; it contains a small powder charge which detonates four seconds after striking. Taking advantage of the interlude as we crept nearer to the beast, I changed magazines to be sure to have plenty of film. It was tough, holding the harpooner and background; the boat pitched wildly, and I wondered how the gunner could even get a sight. Suddenly, he galvanized into action. Bang! went the gun, and the thin harpoon line snaked after the dart. It was a bull's-eye just forward of the dorsal area. Mr. Whale departed for subterranean depths in great surprise. The harpoon line fairly smoked as it slithered over the gunwale. Fully a half mile of rope must have been payed out before our catch broke water far ahead. I switched to a long lens for better detail. The skipper took over the wheel at this point and began to play the whale. It is done in the same manner your proficient Izaak Walton lands a big fish, only instead of a smooth clicking reel, a steam winch is used. At first, our game struggled furiously. Then, no doubt due to the lethal effects of the explosion, his flailings became more spasmodic. When we were within two hundred feet of him, he made one supreme effort to break loose. Up and down he dove but his plunges were short-lived; with a final gesture, he slapped the water a resound-

ing thwack with his flukes, blew a feeble blood-flecked spout, then surrendered.

"The crew set up a cheer. It was a magnificent specimen of the Blue or Sulphur-Bottom Whale; the much sought *shiro-nagaskujira*. A small, square-sterned boat put out with a working detail; we shot the action before us. Dexterously sculling the tender by a single oar aft, the leader steered to the tail of the dead whale. A hawser was slipped around the portion of the body just forward of the flukes, for towing purposes. Next, a steel shaft bearing the house flag of the Toyo Hoge Company was planted atop the carcass. This done, the *Ganjitsu Maru* got under way, towing the prize to a mother mooring ship which was anchored near by. Then we were off to 'cut in' another whale.

"A week of this resulted in the capture of three beauties, one of which measured over seventy feet from tip to flukes. The harpooner estimated its weight at better than sixty tons.

"Things went pretty quiet for a while. We took a look at our equipment. The salt water had corroded everything, and I had an awful time getting pits out of the pressure plate of the intermittent. I was afraid of emulsion pick-up and doused the aperture with plenty of oil. Paul appointed himself to clean the armature of the camera motor. While he was doing it the skipper came to us, jabbering away excitedly. There was a terrific commotion astern. A school of killer whales was rushing a lone mother of another species and her cub. You think a shark is a tough customer? Well, you should see those killer whales in action. They really are the wolves of the sea, and a whale would rather tackle anything in preference to these overgrown dolphins. They run about thirty feet long, and are unmatched for ferocity. Unfortunately, the combat was too far off to photograph. A telephoto lens, with its small field, could never have held them, because the ship was rising and falling with the swell. But we watched the one-sided battle. The baby was soon dispatched, and then the infuriated mother rushed in, flailing at the foe. The killers ripped in and out like lightning, tearing great strips of flesh from her body. It is a favourite stunt of a killer to get its teeth in a portion of its victim's jaw. Then it twists its own body rapidly, completely shearing

off the enemy's jawbone. In a few minutes the fight was over. Nothing remained but the torn carcass of the cow.

"We headed south once more and managed to get some fine pictures of a monster fin-back whale being caught. It had a rich growth of whalebone in its mouth, and the hunters were elated. They knew that their expedition would prove to be a profitable one. This last strike exhausted our film supply, and after packing away the equipment, Paul and I settled down to enjoy the rest of the trip.

"Back at the mooring ship we retrieved our catch. With the five carcasses safely in tow, the *Ganjitsu Maru* steamed for Toshimo. Our headway was slow, owing to the heavy, dead load we dragged aft, but in a few days we raised the rocky outline of Kamchatka Peninsula. Cheerless as it seemed, it was a welcome sight of land.

"Upon coming topside the following morning I noticed that the sea was very glassy and the clouds overhead were quite feathery. In those waters, mare's-tail clouds generally portend hurricane weather. For verification, I went forward to study the glass. It was well down, and the skipper, upon seeing my concern, grimly nodded his head. Not a zephyr stirred. Yet slowly but surely nimbus clouds began to blacken the horizon. It was ominously still, and my mind went back to those hours preceding the great Tokyo disaster when just such a calm befell the city before that awful tidal wave rolled in to spread death and destruction.

"'Looks dirty, doesn't it?' observed Paul when he joined me. I agreed. The skipper was chewing his upper lip speculatively as he scanned the shore through his binoculars. The sun had disappeared behind the banked clouds but a ghastly glow bathed the sea with its weird light; a faint breeze popped up from the starboard quarter. On its trail was wafted the scent of joss.

"Paul looked at me. It was evident that our superstitious crew was also concerned about the weather, for they had lighted incense to appease the gods of destruction. Superstition or not, the bosun routed all hands out, directing them to get busy. Hatches were battened down, rigging checked, and all loose impedimenta cleared from the decks. By the time they had finished, white caps were flecking the surface, and a stiff breeze whipped across the bow. It muttered and whinnied through the rigging with ever increasing volume. Great

billows surged abeam of us, and one found its mark. With a sickening lurch the ship heeled to starboard, and the rails disappeared beneath the avalanche of water. It sloughed over the hatches and raced down the scuppers, seeking out any loose prey. Sea after sea broke over the ship.

"Forced to retreat to a leeward hatchway, we donned oilskins and watched the storm. With a terrific roar the full fury of the gale descended upon us. The angry, green water pounded the nose of the ship with titanic violence. It was hard going, too, for the weight of the whales retarded us a great deal. At times we literally stood still, held back by the weight and wind. Night closed in, but the storm persisted. For fear of running ashore, our course was materially altered, putting the wind abeam. The pitching changed to terrifying rolls, and the rain beat down from all sides. It struck with the impact of lead pellets.

"Down below, the cabin was a shambles. Our gear had broken loose, spreading all over the deck. Dropping to our hands and knees, we struggled to collect it together. The beams of the ship creaked and groaned as they worked, and it began to look as though we might founder. The continual motion plus the malodorous atmosphere of the cabin began to have its effect, and we both, though normally good sailors, became sick. Heise looked at me and groaned: 'What I would give for a little piece of land about a foot square.' I seconded his wish. All through the night we plunged and bucked.

"Along about halfway through the middle watch we heard a great clamour on deck. Anything was better than the cabin, so we struggled up the companion way to see what the racket was all about. In the rays of a sputtering acetylene torch we could see the crew struggling to sever the lines that held the whales. The skipper explained that the dead weight threatened to drag us shorewards to the dangers of the rocky shoals. One by one the ropes were cut. They snapped with rifle-like reports. When the last line was let go, a noticeable improvement in riding was apparent. Seven bells saw the backbone of the gale broken, and by four bells of the morning watch a beam of sunlight slanted through a cock's eye in the raising clouds. We wrapped ourselves in *futon* quilts and dropped to the deck of the cabin for a rest; but our hopes were shattered. Some of the crew—no doubt as a

token to the storm gods—unearthed a couple of those banjo-like samisens, and to their twangy, monotonous discords, they struck up the inevitable nasal chant they call music. For hours we had to listen to the dismal '*Ya-ra-ku-ra-sa. Ya-ra-ku-ra-sa.*'

"Over and over they repeated the lines; never varying the inflection. Bodily exhaustion soon won, however, and we drifted off to sleep.

"The next morning I noticed our lookout studying the waters with a powerful pair of binoculars. His actions were soon explained. He shouted to the helmsman, the boat was shifted to port, and much to my surprise we came alongside one of the forsaken whales."

"How on earth did they locate it?" asked my partner.

"They are clever people, Johnny," smiled Varges. "You remember my mentioning a house flag being used to stake out the whales? Well, the red and white bunting offers a highly visible marker. They put one on each whale before letting him loose, and—there you are.

"By noon we had located all five whales, and having them once more in tow, we headed for Toshimo again. Another day raised the coast line, and before long we were warping up to the pier of the whaling company. News of our coming had preceded us, and all the natives were down to meet us in holiday attire. The girls were arrayed in their silk kimonos and bright-coloured *obis*, while the men sported their best *haori* coats; even a few stoical Shinto priests were there, wearing elaborately brocaded kimonos. There would be big doings that day in celebration of our safe homecoming after such a storm. The manager of the station extended us a hearty welcome, begging us to be his guests at a great whale *sukiyaki* dinner that night. He grinned as he extolled the attractions of the feast, and intimated that plenty fine saké plus pretty geisha girls would top off the night's entertainment. Thanking him warmly, we explained the necessity of getting back to Yokohama as quickly as possible to ship the film on the next liner bound for San Francisco. He hid his disappointment as best he could and bade us a polite Sayonara."

"And what did the home office say about the film?" I asked.

"Technically okay," Varges replied.

CHAPTER VI

The Fire Walkers of Fiji

DOWN below the Equator, among the islands of the South Seas, one can still see much that is strange and primitive. While combing that area for movietone subjects last winter we put in at Suva, Fiji. Suva is on Vita Levu, the largest island in the group. It serves as a leading trading centre and capital of one of Britain's Crown Colonies. We were enjoying tiffin on the terrace of the Grand Pacific Hotel. Sir Henry Gregory, Minister of Native Affairs, brought up the subject of the Fire Walkers.

"I say, y'know, I rather fancy it would make a jolly fine subject for your cinema gazette," Sir Henry remarked. "Extrawdin'ry the way those beggars expose their bare feet to the hot stones."

"Is it on the up-and-up?" asked Johnny Tondra, my partner.

"Emphatically," affirmed Michael Greaves, a British acquaintance of ours down in the Islands. "It's a ritual, y'know, and accordin' to the local legend a gnome, on consideration of his life being spared, conferred upon those particular Johnnies immunity from fire."

"I thought all Fijians did this fire walking," I said.

"No, indeed," said Greaves. "It's restricted to the bushmen of Beqa Island, and they keep it strictly secret. Sort of superiority thing, y'know. The other natives are in awe of the Beqans. Few white men ever go over to the island, and if you decide to go, you will have to charter a native schooner. Look here, boys, perhaps I can be of some use to you. As a matter of fact, I'm one of the few fortunate chaps who have seen the ceremony. If you decide to go, I'd like to join you. What?"

"Done," we said. And we sealed the bargain with some of John Haig's best.

But things move slowly in the Fiji Islands, and we were several

days in finding a suitable boat. Movietone equipment is composed of a sizable assortment of units, and what with baskets of food, breakers of water, and other paraphernalia, we had to charter a fairly large boat. The skipper of the craft—it was called the *Vakananuni*—after haggling over some extra shillings, offered to double as interpreter. His name was Tooita.

“Better maybe you fellahs make allgolong by eightbell he ring night-time,” he advised. Deciphering his typical salt-water man *bêche-de-mer*, or pidgin, vernacular we gathered that midnight was the indicated time.

Getting down to the pier an hour or so before sailing, we superintended the loading of our gear. Once everything was squared away, no time was lost in casting off lines. Greaves, Tondra, and myself lounged on a pile of canvas topside, preferring this to the cabin, which reeked with the smell of dried copra. Smoking cigarettes and chatting quietly, we enlightened Greaves as to what was new around London town. He’d been away from home some ten years, and welcomed gossip about Piccadilly and Mayfair.

I looked around. In the flickering, smoky light of an oil lamp, the crew of the *Vakananuni* looked sinister. They were a polyglot bunch conscripted from everywhere. There were brawny Tongans, lean New Caledonia boys, and even a few tough Solomon Islanders. The majority, however, were Fijians, and their woolly hair lent added height to unusually tall physiques. Solemnly, with great round eyes, they studied us, and a creepy feeling ran up and down my spine at their unblinking stares. My mind recalled a monument I’d seen up in Tutuila, Samoa. It marks the spot on Massacre Bay where fifty white men were killed by the blood-crazy crew of a trading schooner, not so far back. “Some of these boys are but one generation removed from cannibalism,” I reflected, “and we wouldn’t stand a chance if they mobbed us.” Even to-day men delve into the bush lands of the Solomons—and never come back. . . .

It was a lovely night. A balmy trade wind whispered through the rigging. Overhead, the Southern Cross blazed against the deep indigo of a tropic sky, and out in the darkness we could hear the booming surf and see its phosphorescent crest as it ripped along a coral reef. One by one the crew dropped off to sleep, and we soon joined them,

lulled by the lonesome, creaky sigh of the boom as it swung idly back and forth.

The next morning Greaves said, "There's our destination." Through the haze we could see Beqa looming up. The smoky profile of its volcanic backbone rose to a height of two thousand feet in a series of graceful convolutions, and the surf crashing against its rocky shores tossed spray high into the air, creating a mist that lent a dusky outline to the island. Drawing closer, we noticed the prolific coconut palms leaning far out over the water's edge in graceful, beckoning attitudes. Cautiously skirting the coral atoll, the *Vakana-nuni* found a narrow opening. There we entered a shallow harbour.

The anchor was dropped about six hundred yards offshore. We could see the flash of brilliantly coloured lava-lavas as they flitted against the background of rich green foliage. The deep, mournful note of a conch-shell signal reached our ears. Suddenly a small outrigger canoe shot out from the shore, headed our way. Reaching hail-ing distance, its occupants shouted something to Tooita, who in turn answered them. Back to shore they paddled furiously, and upon Tooita's assurance that everything was arranged, we stepped into a little tender and followed. As we neared the beach I studied the group of natives who were quietly awaiting us. They seemed to be a nobler type of Melanesian and much more primitive than those usually seen in Fiji, even affecting the ancient Ti leaf skirts of their fathers. The keel of our dinghy grated to a halt on the pebbly beach and one particularly imposing native, bearing a straw fly switch, raised it aloft in salute and shouted:

"Bula Bulavo!"

"That's Rata Jone, the head chief or Buli, and he is wishing us a long and prosperous life," Greaves informed us.

"I hope he means it," muttered Johnny as we waded ashore.

Rata Jone seemed a good sort, and after proudly showing us around the village he led the way to the most imposing of the pandanus leaf houses and motioned us to enter. Within, after our eyes had become accustomed to the murky gloom, we became aware of the presence of a score or more warriors. Squatting on *lahala* mats and smoking banana-leaf cigarettes, they eyed us sullenly beneath beetling brows. Heads together, they seemed to be tallying opinions

concerning us, and I'm sure I noted a couple of fierce-looking birds that spat contemptuously.

"Charmin' company, isn't it?" remarked Greaves.

Nevertheless, in obedience to their chief, they grunted a sort of welcome. Through Tooita we conveyed the purpose of our visit. His words were greeted with a low rumble of displeasure on the part of the bushmen.

"Steady, old fellow. You'll have to handle these Johnnies with kid gloves, y'know," warned Greaves. "They don't approve of publicizin' their rituals for the askin'. This fire business will have to be approached cannily. They like to talk things . . . Oh, Lord!"

"What's wrong?" I asked, noticing a large wooden bowl being placed before the Buli. "Is that the official chopping bowl?"

"No," said Greaves with a long face. "It's a *kava* bowl for the mixin' of their native drink."

"What's it like?" demanded Johnny.

"A vile concoction that tastes like bilge water tinctured with soap-suds. They make it from the root of Yangona. It's customary to offer it to visitors, and you have got to pretend you like it."

In silence we watched the preparations. First, a quantity of the root was shredded and then dipped into a bit of water that had been poured into the bowl. Lifting the sodden mass, the maker twisted it dry, allowing the surplus liquid to dribble back into the container. This was repeated over and over; a little water was added after each twist until the bowl was filled with the milky *kava*. At this point, the natives began chanting and, as if at a cue, two statuesque females entered the hut; each carried the polished half of a coconut shell in cupped hands, and after having them filled they slowly approached us. Halting just at arm's length, they knelt, then extended the cups to us.

"The etiquette is that you've got to drink bottoms up, or they'll get sore," Greaves explained.

I nearly choked over the bitter, chalky stuff, and if you think a coconut shell doesn't hold much, try it sometime. Nevertheless, we downed it, and this seemed to please the natives greatly.

"*Bula Bulavo! Bula Bulavo!*" they grunted, clapping cupped palms in unison.

"Bloody awful, isn't it?" said Greaves, with a grimace.

"Make mine vanilla the next time," added Johnny.

One by one the Fijians partook of the *kava*, starting with the Buli and going on down the line. They seemed more friendly now, and indicated a desire to inspect our apparatus. The camera was comprehensible to them, but the amplifier and microphones were beyond their ken. I sparked one of the wet batteries by shorting the terminals with a pair of pliers, and at the angry bluish flame two staid old bucks jumped a yard.

"*Tabu*," they muttered, edging away. Following a palaver with the Buli, Tooita interpreted his conversation.

"After *kai-kai* [food] Rata Jone him like white fellah make jumping picture go," he said. "The warriors do fine spear *meke* [dance]."

"Sure," we agreed.

The Buli ordered a temporary lean-to of palm leaves erected, and in its cool shade we found a typical native spread prepared. There were yams, wild pigeons, prawns, and steaming slabs of tortoise meat waiting to be sampled. For dessert we had custard apples and wild tangerines.

By the time we had finished, the natives were assembled in the village square. They were decked out in barbaric outfits of tapa cloth, and each carried a long wicked-looking spear. An old man began tapping upon a hollow log and to its rhythmic tempo the men performed a war dance. Emulating the hardships of a jungle sortie, they would crawl on all fours, as though stalking an enemy, then with savage yelps they would leap up, thrusting at imaginary foes, cutting and slashing with astonishing agility. It gave us an opportunity to get some splendid action angles, and we switched lenses in rapid succession to catch intimate bits of the performance. Right and left Johnny panned the camera, holding the group as it moved en masse in some skulking manoeuvre.

I passed the ear phones to the chief, that he might listen in. Hearing the racket of his subjects, greatly amplified by the recording system, his jaw dropped in amazement. Excitedly summoning the more important members of his tribe, the Buli bade them listen. Gingerly putting the phones to their ears, they listened in incredulous wonder. It was laughable to watch their reactions. Some

dropped the phones with shrieks of fear, while others were stupefied by what they heard. From that moment our position was assured. We were super-beings in their eyes. The Buli directed a long speech towards us, terminating it with a reverent bow.

"White fellah's magic are overwhelm humble Fiji Islander," translated Tooita. "Beqa bids you welcome, and her people will do fire walking."

The Buli pointed towards the bush surrounding the village, motioning us to follow him. Several men were commandeered to carry our apparatus—it took a bit of persuasion to get them to touch it, at that—and after a short trek through the dense undergrowth we came upon a clearing. In its centre was a circular pit some twenty feet in diameter. Natives were busy piling saplings and sticks into it.

"This is the place," whispered Greaves excitedly. "You have been admitted to a spot rarely seen by white men."

We studied the location for our work. Heavy shadows cast by giant ferns and wide sweeping traveller's trees presented a photographic problem. Strong as the tropic sun was, its rays filtered only dimly through the barrage of jungle growth.

"I'll have to shoot this pretty nearly wide open," murmured Johnny. "Hell's bells! If we get any definition out of their black maps I'll be lucky. No repeats, I suppose, eh, Michael?"

"My aunt, no!" answered Greaves. "This isn't a circus performance. It's a ritual, and we're lucky to get them to do it once."

"That means a two-inch shot, then," I observed. "No time for a close-up, yet we'll have to establish the whole group, otherwise the picture's useless."

"I can hear someone back in the office saying, 'Lousy!' " hummed Johnny.

"Cheer up," I said. "Maybe we'll get a break."

"What the devil do you mean by such terms?" inquired Greaves. "One says, 'Lousy!' the other speaks of getting a break. I say, you Yanks are priceless with your quaint slang."

"Yer blinkin' right, old squid," Johnny grinned.

Once the camera position was decided upon, the sound outfit was hooked up. Two microphones were linked in parallel circuits as an extra precaution against tropic dampness; it is the greatest enemy

of delicate apparatus. In view of our opportunity, nothing must fail.

The pit was quite filled with wood when we finished our preparations, and the second phase of the ceremony commenced. One of the savages rapidly twirled a pointed stick among stones and dried chips; as they began to smoulder, he coaxed a tiny flame from them. Igniting a primitive torch, he passed it to the chief with a flourish, and the Buli, after muttering an incantation, applied it to the pit. Up sprang long tongues of flame, angrily licking the larger branches of wood atop the pile. Soon it was a roaring fury. Left hand on each other's shoulders, while right grasped large rocks, the Fijians commenced a frenzied snake dance around the pit. As they circled, they hurled the stones into the flames and grabbed up others from a convenient pile. As they danced, an old, old song burst from their lips, punctuated by the snap and crackle of the fire.

*"A! woi! woi! woi! A! woi! woi! woi! A tabua levu!
A mudua, mudua, mudua, mudua! A! woi! woi! woi!"*

This was kept up until all the stones were piled upon the fire. Then, with one final yell, the natives halted abruptly.

"That is about all you can make to-day," said Greaves.

"But what about the fire walking?" we asked in dismay.

"The fire must burn until the stones are hot enough. It takes about twenty-four hours. Then they will come back to walk across the pit."

"Then that's that," shrugged Johnny. "Come on, Chic, let's break down for the day."

There seemed no alternative, so, after warning Tooita to keep a sharp eye out for meddlers, we left the outfit in his charge and returned to the village. It was just as well, for after a hasty meal garnished from our food hampers, we tacked up mosquito canopies and gratefully turned in.

The stuffy atmosphere of our grass house—the chief had turned his own over to us—made sleeping difficult. For several hours I lay wide-eyed, despite fatigue. The surf seemed unusually loud; somewhere a dog barked, and I could hear a baby squalling just as its

brothers would be doing all over the world. Then a new note assailed my ears. I listened more sharply. It was the unmistakable thump of a tom-tom.

"Wonder what that could be?" I murmured to myself.

"Oh. Are you awake too?" I started. . . . It was Greaves.

"Yes. Who could be beating a tom-tom at this hour?"

"It is the tocsin of the fire walkers," he answered, quietly. "Tonight, in response to that summons, the tribe will convene in a sacred jungle retreat. Eight men will be selected to perform to-morrow. That is one part of the ceremony no white man has ever seen."

"What I'd give to get a picture of that!" I exclaimed.

"You could never find the place in the darkness," remonstrated Greaves. "And besides, they would probably kill you." He was right, but the thoughts of what might be going on out there tantalized me.

"I've a good mind to sneak out and at least get a peek at it," I persisted.

"I wouldn't try it," advised Greaves. "Did you by any chance notice that our hut is guarded to-night?"

Crawling to the doorway, I verified his observation. Sure enough, a shadowy form became alert at my presence. It was an ably armed warrior. Blocking the exit with his bulk, he sternly grunted:

"Tabu!"

Greaves was chuckling when I returned to my sleeping mats. "You Yanks are never satisfied," he chided good-naturedly. Then, becoming serious, he continued: "When she so disposes, Fiji guards her secrets well, and the mystery of the fire walkers is one of them. What they do to offset the ravages of fire, no one but themselves will ever know. Come along, now. Forget it." I must have, for the next recollection was of dawn.

After a hurried breakfast we trekked out into the bush and prepared for action. The heat in the clearing was terrific. A withering blast came from the pit. Thick, oily clouds of smoke weaved and writhed from the depths of the conflagration.

With crossed fingers I checked the outfit. The bugaboo of humidity's effect worried me. A clean-cut signal allayed my fears, however. "Thank heavens," I breathed. Johnny dried the moisture

from his camera's surface plate and checked the focus of each lens attached to the revolving turret of the box. It would be necessary to snap from long shot to close-up in jig time on this story. Nothing must slip, for we had travelled eight thousand miles to record the ritual.

The soft harmony of male voices commenced.

"Fire dance, him begin now," whispered Tooita nervously.

"Here she goes," said Johnny fervently, snapping on the camera switch. Carefully checking the tachometer, he adjusted the speed. Eighty feet a minute raced the film past the aperture. Eighty-five, eighty-eight—ninety, it wavered, then steadied. We were ready.

Four abreast, brilliantly arrayed in vivid skirts of banana leaf, flower leis, and shark-tooth ornaments, the Fijians entered the clearing led by their chief. Behind them they dragged long ropes plaited from banyan roots. Still singing, the savages closed in on the pit with spears directed at it. Around and around they circled, crouching and leaping into the air alternately. Then, with a quick, deft movement they lunged at the fire, jabbing and poking the glowing mass savagely. The mound of rocks atop the blazing wood was thus being levelled by this attack. Next, they looped the heavy banyan ropes around the more obstinate boulders and tugged away. Slowly but surely the pit was smoothly graded. A faster note crept into their song, and they became more animated. It was a weird sight as they scuttled back and forth against the background of the pit; its awful heat created a mirage effect over the whole scene. The savages seemed like imps of perdition, with their frizzled hair bobbing wildly, soot-streaked faces, and gleaming bodies smeared with cocoa oil. More natives entered, placing great sheaves of freshly cut palm leaves close to the pit, while others laid out rows of woven-grass bundles tied with rattan.

"They contain food which will be tossed into the embers after the ceremony," explained Greaves in answer to my look. "It will be served at the fire feast to-night."

The stones were absolutely level now. Resuming the original soft cadences of their song, the natives squatted in orderly rows facing the pit. Rata Jone raised his hands for silence.

"Great stuff, eh?" remarked Johnny as he reloaded his camera.

A shrill cry interrupted my answer. It was the Buli. With upraised spear, he was facing the jungle and calling.

"Owooooooooooooooooooooo! Owooooooooooooooooooooo!"

Save for the low whine of the camera motor, the place was dead quiet. A minute passed, then the soft thud of running feet became audible. Out of the jungle filed the eight warriors. Their faces, streaked with white paint, were set in grim lines. Straight for the pit they jogged. Halting but a minute at the edge, the leader slowly and deliberately placed his bare foot upon the livid coals. A feather of smoke curled around his ankle at the contact. Across and back he walked; the others followed fearlessly. I could see the blackened imprint of their scorched soles upon the glowing rocks. Once again they crossed the pit. Not a one flinched.

Then pandemonium broke loose. With demoniacal yells and cackles, the audience leaped up, grabbed the palm branches, and hurled them into the fire. Clouds of steam and smoke spurted up as damp greens met white heat. The bundles of food followed next, then the whole tribe jumped and wallowed in the crackling, smouldering mass. Hand in hand they whirled and pranced around the pit. The terrific heat soon had its effect, however, for one by one they dropped to the ground exhausted. What a show! We moved in for close-ups of the walkers' feet, then called it a day.

Back at the village once more, we stripped and bathed in the refreshing waters of a natural lagoon. Soot-begrimed, tousled hair, and eyes still red-rimmed from the smarting smoke, we looked a little like savages ourselves.

The Buli insisted that we stay over for the feast, and I'm glad we did. By the light of gigantic driftwood bonfires we had dinner on the beach. Long into the night the natives danced and sang for our benefit. The women wore their finest *tapa*-cloth dresses and even the children joined in to amuse us with their quaint little dances.

We reciprocated by playing our portable phonograph, and it was interesting to watch their natural reaction upon hearing certain dance rhythms as interpreted by a currently popular Harlem band. The same basic tempo formed the pattern of their own melodies. No one slept that night, and when the first streaks of dawn traced pale coral

fingers across the cloudless sky, Tooita reminded us that we must go.

Exchanging of gifts, the final ceremony of our visit, now took place. Tortoise-shell bracelets, leis, and spears were our lot. We were truly affected by the simple hospitality of these Melanesians. Standing in the tender, we could hear the sweet harmony of their voices blended in the chorus of their favourite song, "*Isa Lei*," as it drifted softly across the ever widening gap of water.

Someone draped his arm around my shoulder. It was good old Greaves. He seemed moved too.

"I shall never forget this visit, Michael," I said. He nodded and smiled.

"Not a bad show. What?"

CHAPTER VII

Surf Riding at Waikiki

JOHNNY TONDRA, my partner, and I were lying on the beach at Waikiki in Hawaii, admiring the beauties of nature. It was the morning of our last assignment before starting home. For the moment nature was grand. Grand, I think, than anywhere else. Certainly, to me Hawaii is the least overrated place in the world.

"Just look at those mountains, will you!" exclaimed Johnny, with real feeling. "It seems a desecration to make black-and-white movies of this place. Only a colour camera can do it justice."

He was right, too. From our position on the beach in front of the famous Outrigger Canoe Club one could sate one's appetite for pagan beauty to the utmost. Emerald hills blending into amethyst where they dipped into luxuriant Nuuanu Valley, the Punchbowl with its tawny sides reflecting the warm rays of a tropic sun, Royal palms waving gracefully against a cobalt-blue sky, all formed a regal diadem to the coral-fringed sweep of Waikiki. Somewhere up the beach a Kanaka was gently fingering a uke. To its accompaniment he sang softly in the liquid nuances of the Polynesian tongue. It was a languid, haunting melody—the beloved "*Imi Au Ia Oe*" of all Island residents, be they *haole* (white) or native.

There is a poem by Don Blanding, and it speaks the truth. It begins:

Oh you'll never know Hawaii 'til you've seen the lunar rainbow's
phantom arch across the blue,
'Til the singing boys have stabbed your heart with music . . .
through and through;
'Til you've raced the silver surf at Waikiki.

And *that* was our last assignment before going home. Not, you understand, seeing the rainbow's phantom arch, but racing the surf.

So we sauntered into the cool shade of a banyan grove back some hundreds of feet from the water's edge, to the long low Club building alongside of which rested a score or more of the big canoes, supported by canvas strap slings. They ranged from the single-paddle type to monster sixty-footers. Ted Evers, guardian of the canoes, is one of the few white men who can really manipulate the giant outriggers. Sun-tanned and wind-whipped from being years around the water, Evers is almost the shade of a full-blooded Kanaka.

"Glad to accommodate you," he said. "I've taken plenty of movie men offshore."

"But this is going to be a sound picture," I warned, "and that means a lot more equipment."

"How about this baby? Will she do?" asked Evers, indicating a long chrome-yellow hull. It was a brute, measuring a good fifty feet from prow to stern—one of the original war canoes, he assured us, hewed from a solid Koa log, and formerly used by the natives for travel from island to island. I mentioned that it seemed kind of narrow, noting the eighteen-inch beam, but Evers assured us it would do the business for us.

He was rather astonished, though, when he saw the maze of batteries, cables, and other paraphernalia we brought along at the appointed hour that afternoon, three hundred pounds of it to be loaded into the narrow craft, in addition to four paddlers, the two of us, and Evers, the steersman. The camera was mounted on a baby tripod which just fitted into the hull, and the sound amplifier along with its four hundred volts of B battery was strung out over half the length of the canoe.

Giving the outfit a trial run, we found it in good shape. Evers, prompted by us, gave the native boys instructions as to their part in the show—to make a lot of noise as they came in on the wave, not to look at the camera, and things like that. But he was obviously eager to get off. "This breeze might change," he said, looking up at the gossamer clouds that were slowly drifting seawards, "and Kona winds are bad for surfing. It's the offshore trades that we want."

With a last-minute injunction to the surfers that they keep

bunched together while we were shooting, Evers ordered the canoe launched, and we were off. The big canoe slid through the crystal-clear water smoothly, leaping forwards a full five yards at each stroke. Over the soft splash of the paddles we could hear the boom of the surf as it raced shorewards at express-train speed. The great, frothy combers made a pretty picture when their crests spilled over sapphire calm to leave a lacy wake of curdling foam now turned to delicate shades of aquamarine. Zooming along, they surged towards the beach, only to level off into great, flat undulations that lapped peacefully at the coral sands. Nowhere in the world will you find such a phenomenon save at Waikiki. Surfing amidst giant waves a quarter mile off shore, yet the calm of a lake at its edge.

"That's enough," shouted Evers, dragging his paddle to swing the canoe around. The surf boys soon joined us, propelling themselves swiftly with their arms as they lay prone upon the boards. A truly indolent way to maintain buoyancy.

While our helmsman manoeuvred the craft so that it headed straight for shore, we prepared to shoot. The canoe was lifting and dipping gently to the billows as Evers permitted them to roll onward. He was waiting for a big one.

"Any second now," he warned, looking back over his shoulder and poising his paddle. Following his glance, we could see a monster wave travelling majestically towards us.

"Get set," called Evers. We began to feel the canoe lift to the billow's impulse when our stern man gave the signal.

"Paddle!" he barked.

Simultaneously, four blades dug deep into the water, and the canoe lunged forward like a scared rabbit. Our camera was trained upon the surfers as they raced along to mount the same wave. Faster and faster we skimmed, the paddles rising and falling in savage unison. It takes skill and brawn to snatch a hitch from Father Neptune.

"'Nough!" cried Evers.

Now a new propelling force was driving us along. We could feel its powerful impulse. Fully thirty miles an hour we raced shorewards; the water hissed and purled angrily along the sides of the hull, and we could feel the salty sting of spindrift as it sprayed our faces. What a thrill! On the crest of a wave!

The Kanakas had gained their feet and were shouting gleefully as they raced along beside us. "Hi! Hi!" they called, skilfully guiding the course of the boards by shifting their weight to one side or the other. We waved to them as they worked, calling them by their nicknames, known to thousands of tourists. There were Sergeant and Bad Bill zig-zagging their boards deftly, while pearly teeth were bared in broad grins of sheer enjoyment. Their arms were widespread in graceful gestures of poise; two splendid silhouettes of manhood. Hawkshaw, beloved of every kid that paddles at Waikiki, was clowning and cutting up in his own inimitable manner. One minute it was a hula step; another, he was standing on his head as unconcernedly as though he were on a stationary platform, instead of a two-inch plank, skimming over the water like a flying fish. I've ice-boated, skied, and tobogganed, but nothing ever approached the zest and thrill of that sizzling ride. But too soon the power of the comber was spent, and we began to slow down as the boys backpaddled to retard the canoe's progress.

"We've just got to have another run like that," said Johnny. "Made some nice stuff that time, and now we've got to get angles."

After a short time of stiff paddling, we noticed the breeze had freshened. We wheeled around and raced shorewards once again. The wind kicked up the surface quite a bit, and during the ride we were pretty well drenched. Wiping the lenses dry, and going over all electrical connections to make sure that there would be no leakage, we decided that another run might just as well be made for the purpose of bold close-ups.

"We'll have to step on it this time," broke in Evers, a bit of concern tingeing his words. "The wind has shifted to another quarter, and on that last run I had a tough time holding the canoe true on its course. With all the stuff you put in her, she doesn't respond the way she ought to."

Back at the starting line we waited a while until Johnny had focussed his six-inch lens for an individual shot of the best surfer. I noticed, with the aid of my ear phones, that the thunder of the surf was growing louder.

Johnny made the "Let her go" signal.

Once again we leaped forward, and this time we fairly scudded.

The wave that propelled us was gigantic; every inch of the canoe's length vibrated to the comber's force. Even the Kanakas seemed to be having trouble in keeping their balance on the surf boards; they wobbled perilously from side to side, and their grins had changed to looks of worry.

One hundred—two hundred feet we sped, then the canoe began to yaw. Evers was frantically straining at the paddle in an effort to keep us on a straight line; his teeth were gritted, and his biceps bulged to the utmost.

It was too much for one man, however. Veering sharply, the heavy craft started to ride the wave's crest obliquely. The effect was to raise the balancing outrigger from the water, and as this happened, we began turning over like a log. Helpless in the grip of the surf, we were swamped in an instant. We were about to capsize completely when Evers, with a heroic lunge, leaped out to throw his weight on the outrigger. This saved the canoe from turning bottom up, but now, without the guidance of a steersman, it spun crazily. Inside the craft we were having our own troubles. The water had shorted all the batteries, and everything was sputtering and crackling; smoke shot out of the amplifier, and we felt the sting of the juice as high-frequency leads charged the salt water.

Another breaker crashed against the canoe. The camera broke its lashings and fell full upon us. Johnny let out a howl of pain as a tripod leg folded on his fingers, and I caught the sharp corner of the camera square in my face. Blood began trickling down the side of my nose, and I felt myself getting dizzy. I was frantically trying to get free before we turned over. I discovered that my foot was wedged tight by a sixty-pound battery.

How lovely, I thought, if this thing tips over now!

It certainly looked hopeless, but the next wave came to our rescue and washed the canoe far up on the shore. In a few minutes we were being pulled out of the boat by the watching crowd.

After getting patched up a bit we studied the condition of our outfit. It certainly looked hopeless, but nevertheless we unloaded the film magazines and made a test to check results. The drenching had not spoiled the film, and looking at the negative we all agreed that the effort had been worth while.

CHAPTER VIII

The Land of the Living Buddhas

ERIC MAYELL, of our Asiatic staff, happened to be in town when the Sino-Japanese row broke in earnest. He had returned for the purpose of re-outfitting with light, modern equipment.

"You might know," he growled, as he scanned the scareheads, "that I'd miss that fracas over there."

"Cheer up," I kidded. "Alexander, your relief will make some good stuff."

"Yes, but what gripes me is the fact that it was my particular job last summer to cover the doings of the Manchurian war lords. Most of the time we spent up in Harbin, where my soundman, Oscar Darling, myself, and a couple of war correspondents used to play stud. Things were pretty dull."

"Is that all?"

"Well, we did get one break. It seems a cable from the home office instructed us to go down to Shanghai. We were tickled pink at the shift. The cable instructed us to meet a Dr. Ingraham who would arrive on the *Empress of Asia* with sealed orders. We beat the liner in by two days, and that gave us a little time to play around a bit.

"Ingraham proved to be a professor of anthropology attached to the National Geographic Society, and he certainly had passed on a great lead to the office while he was in New York during his leave of absence. To get what we wanted, a long and dangerous journey was necessary, but the results would well warrant the risk. Haste was required also, and all through the night, over innumerable cigarettes, we outlined our plans. Our objective was a little village on the edge of the Gobi Desert. In the morning Ingraham found us a native guide and helped us select supplies for a caravan. After travelling as far as

Peiping with us, Ingraham left to resume his work in the museum there.

"We headed inland by train to Kalgan, and that first day held plenty of interest. There were marvellous views of the Great Wall winding over hills and valleys, and amazing vistas unfolded from the heights of Nankou Pass. We spent the night at Kalgan with some friends of Ingraham. We got up early, arranged for mules, and by noon we left the city by the North Gate. Leaving the rough cobbles of the city for the comparatively smooth open road, we trekked westward over wild, undulating Mongolian country. Camel trains headed for China passed us from time to time.

"Six days out from Kalgan we had lost all evidence of China. This was Mongolia and decidedly different. Our interpreter was a versatile linguist, for aside from the various Mongolian dialects, he spoke Russian, which is frequently the means of communication in that part of the world. The temperature had dropped considerably, and we changed our clothes for the kind of thing the new climate required. Modern garb is poor protection against the biting winds that sweep down from Siberia's frozen steppes.

"Ten days from Kalgan we came upon a wandering band of Mongolians. At first they were rather hostile, but they soon became friends and invited us to spend the night in one of their yurts or felt tents. Their get-up was reminiscent of the days when Mongolia was a world power. Plum-coloured robes combined with brilliantly hued sashes were worn by the men, and the costumes of the women, varied according to their individual tastes, were equally gaudy. With their aid we spliced out our wardrobe with fleece-lined jackets, goatskin shoes, and a sort of burlap parka. The ponies carrying our movietone equipment were exchanged for yaks, our *mafus* [muleteers] transferring the burdens.

"Bidding us farewell, the nomads jogged off on their sturdy little Mongol ponies.

"Our road led us over untamed rivers and deep ravines, veering slightly to the north. Finally, on the fifteenth day, we sighted our goal. Stretched out below us on the edge of a sluggish river was the tiny village of Bargi, one of the remote lamaseries [temple sites] of the Tibetan religion. Here, if possible, we intended to photograph the

the famous '*Chamngyon-wa*,' or Devil Dance. It was on the eve of the annual Butter Festival, and we were in time. The mere fact that we would be able to photograph a lama city was of great value. The natives, if they knew, would not permit it; but their prince Yang Cho Ling, a friend of Ingraham's, had given his consent. White men are not too amiably tolerated by Tibetans.

"Sending our guide ahead, we impatiently watched for the signal that would tell us that one of the prince's men awaited to pass us through the gate of the forbidden city. It came—a flash from a sort of heliograph we had crudely fashioned out of a shaving mirror. We passed several groups of natives without raising suspicion, and soon were within the walls of the city. A guide led us to the yamen, or official residence of the prince. Within the safety of the compound our host bade us welcome and through our interpreter warned us to be discreet, since the priests were wary of all heretics and especially averse to being photographed. The ceremony was to take place the next day.

"All through the night I stayed awake. At daybreak a great gong was struck. The resounding note, reverberating for an interminable time, died out. Then it was struck again. As the brazen sound finally trailed off into the quiet of the dawn, my heart began to beat a little faster. My throat was dry. There was another impressive silence, and then the great gong was pounded rapidly. The hoarse roar of huge trumpets joined the tumult. Cymbals crashed. Finally, out of the chaotic discord of noise came the measured chanting of the lamas. The strong bass vocal chorus was punctuated by the booming thud of yak-hide drums. The hosts of Genghis Khan, in my mind's eye, passed before me. Someone shook my shoulder. It was my partner. 'Plenty of sound on this, Eric!' he grinned. 'Come on. Our guide is waiting.'

"Soon we were crossing the square upon which the chanting hall was situated. We noticed for the first time the splendour of the temple. It was a squat edifice covering considerable ground. Great red-lacquered columns held up the tiled roof, and their rich hue seemed ruddier where they reflected the first rays of the morning's sun. Elaborate tapestries, centuries old, hung from a long balcony stretching across the back of the building, and upon the front terrace

there were many kinds of prayer wheels to be whirled by the pilgrims.

"Our escort led us into a small pagoda-like hut. Breakfast was served there; it consisted of mare's milk, tea, and rancid butter. Fingers were the only utensils, and the filthy atmosphere of the tiny overcrowded place did not help our appetites. We ate in silence. As soon as possible we left the foul hole with the excuse to the host that we had to devote considerable time to setting up our outfit. Back at the temple courtyard, we mounted the camera and set the sound apparatus behind a large tapestry. The gates of the compound were closed to let us photograph the first part of the ceremony unhindered. Everything was ready.

"Exactly at noon a long line of priests filed out of the temple. Separating alternately, they marched down each end of the lamasery's broad steps and arranged themselves around the open square. Some chanted while they marched; others blew enormous trumpets twelve feet long that rent the air with deafening roars. The ammeter recording the degree of gain in the amplifier fairly wrapped itself around the posts. Bells, drums, cymbals, all combined as an overture to the ceremony. The fantastic garb of the monks made me wish for a colour camera. They wore long, vivid scarlet robes and perched upon their heads were helmets, not unlike those of the ancient Roman soldiery, surmounted with bright yellow ruffs.

"I planted my camera in front of the spot where the Living Buddha squatted as he surveyed the proceedings in stolid silence. Darling tried to get the old boy to talk, but a guard threatened to wreck the microphone if he did not remove it from the holy presence. The chief lama never batted an eye at the disturbance. We shifted from one angle to another and then selected a position on the terrace of the temple from which we could shoot scenes of the crowds. If they spotted us there was no telling what they might do.

"Placing a couple of loaded magazines beside me I was prepared to shoot lots of stuff on the show. At a signal, the gates of the compound were thrown wide, and in poured the hordes of eager pilgrims. They pushed and shoved around the prayer wheels and knelt to kiss the robes of the priests. None were allowed to come near the Living God, but they were permitted to touch a rope which he wiggled. They were a tough bunch and boded ill for strangers.

"They became excited; the Bowa or Devil Dancers were appearing. Contrary to general opinion, these people are not priests but a sort of minstrel. They roam from one lamasery to another and perform at certain seasons. The leader wore a hideous mask of red and blue, and his costume was of the finest brocade. In his hands he clutched a jade sceptre capped with a silver skull. He was impersonating Yama (King of Hell). To the rhythmic cacophony of the pagan orchestra, he minced around the square, brandishing his sceptre and at times striking grotesque poses with hands upraised as though bestowing an iniquitous benediction upon the watchers. The onlookers voiced guttural approval of his acting. The members of the cast whirled about in mad groups, reënacting the slaying of King Langdarma who long ago persecuted the Buddhists in an effort to destroy their faith.

"By this time the mixed audience of Tibetans, Mongolians, and other tribes of the Gobi, goaded on by the realistic acting of the demon dancers, had worked themselves into a frenzy. The savage tempo of the dance got under one's skin. With barbaric yells the natives tried to break through the ranks of the priests to join the dancers; but the monks drove them back, lashing away with cruel bamboo whips.

"But one particularly zealous fanatic (he was a 'Black Mongol') managed to slip through the guard and scramble up the steps toward us. He came on us suddenly. He halted; his baleful eyes studied me critically. Then with a leap he covered the distance between us and ripped the fleece-lined jacket off my shoulder. My white skin confirmed his suspicions. Letting out a blood-curdling scream, he dragged me out in sight of the frenzied mob.

"Another big fellow bounded up the steps and turned to harangue the crowd. Things were getting hot! My assailant was struggling to drag me towards the crowd when a monk, who had seemed more friendly than the rest, tore the man from me and sent him headlong on top of his partner. Hissing an order to the other priests to begin chanting, the priest then helped us to break down our outfit.

That was a bad half hour. Never did men pray more devoutly for nightfall than we. We could hear the mob howling and screaming maledictions. Only the threats of the monks kept them from storm-

ing the steps. At last darkness settled down, and piece by piece we smuggled the outfit to one side of the temple, where our sturdy yaks were tethered. How we ever reached the city's gates I'll never know. A trusted servant of the prince passed us out with a wish for good luck.

"As the hardy little beasts struggled up the loess mountain sides with their precious burden, I looked back towards the town. Huge bonfires cast their glow upwards to the sky, where a million stars glittered coldly. Through the bitter, rarefied atmosphere we could hear the tumult of cymbals, horns, and wailing reed instruments."

"That must have been a swell picture, Eric," I remarked.

"I thought so," replied Mayell, his cold, steel-blue eyes twinkling for once. "But the editors said that a close-up of that howling mob clambering up the temple steps to get us would have made a better finish."

"Whose finish?" I asked.



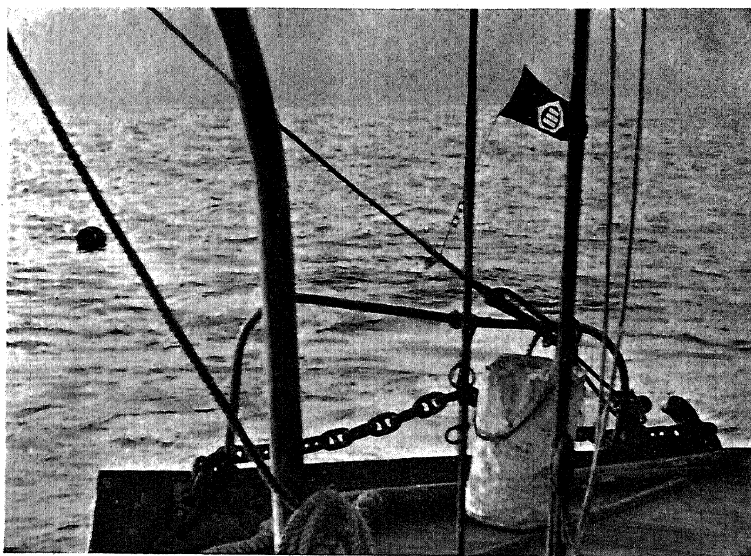
GETTING PLAYFUL.
Innocent as to the
fate that awaits him,
a big fellow cavorts
under the very nose
of the harpoon gun.



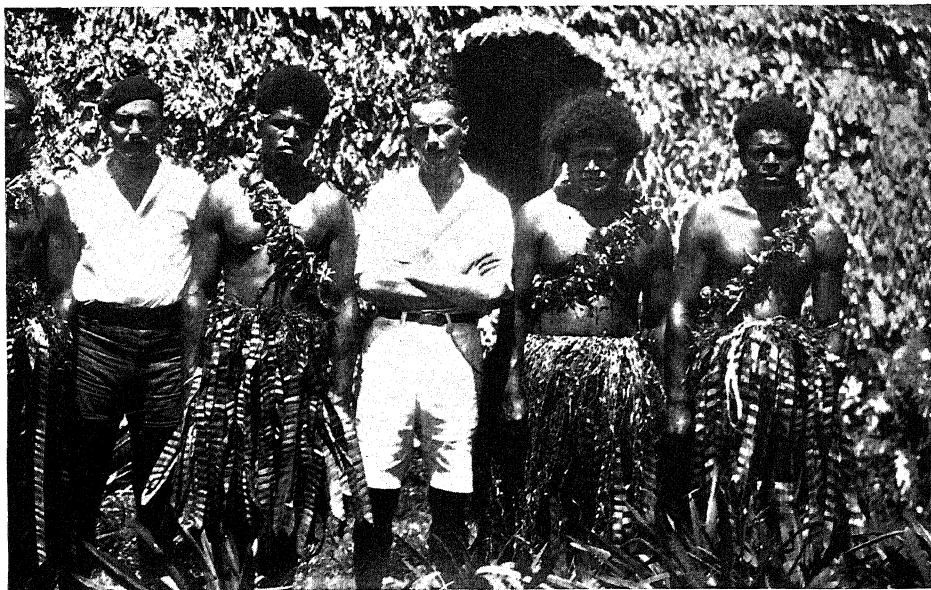
GET SET. The harpooner is about to fire the dart that will serve both as a medium to carry the harpoon line and a lethal charge that will kill the whale.



HAULING IN THE CATCH. The harpooner reeling in his line after the kill.



PROPERTY OF THE TOYO HOGEI COMPANY. The house flag that is planted atop the carcass of the catch, so that it may be easily located.



WITH THE FIRE WALKERS OF FIJI. John Tondra, cameraman, and the author, pose with some of the boys in front of the native chief's pandanus-leaf hut. Tough as they are, the natives are never to be found without some sort of floral adornment, as evidenced by the leis and, in one case, a bud coyly tucked behind the ear. The skirts are made of a sort of palm leaf vividly colored with vegetable dyes.



THE FIRE PIT. After the stones have been in a blazing fire for many hours, the natives prepare to strut their stuff in the famous fire dance.



LEVELING THE STONES. By means of coconut poles and banyan roots for ropes, the fierce natives arrange the white-hot stones so that they offer a smooth, level surface to walk upon. It is during this particular phase of the ceremony that the Fijians work themselves up to a frenzy by chanting old war songs and performing impromptu mekes (dances).



HOT FEET. Despite the fact that these soles were firmly planted upon glowing rocks a short time before, they seem still to be in fairly good condition.

IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND OF THIBET

A group of photographs taken by intrepid newsreel men in the heart of one of the world's last frontiers.



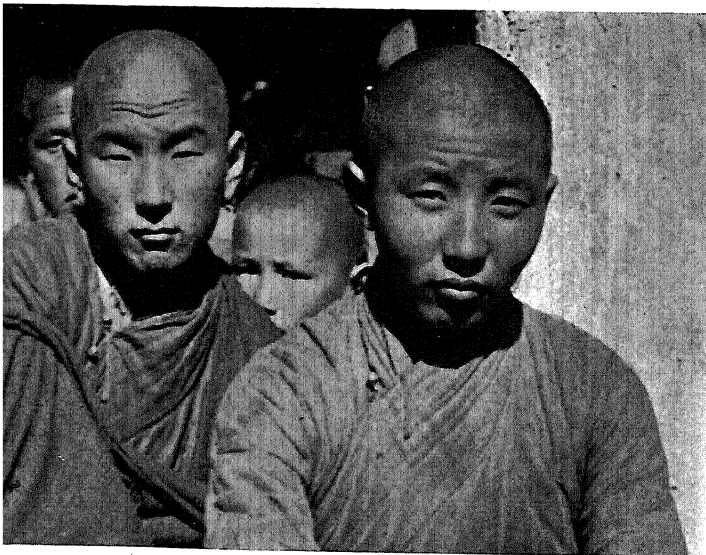
THE LOCAL LIVING BUDDHA in the shadows of the lamasery at Bargi. He is sitting directly behind the banner in the foreground; his hands show clearly above the box-like stand on the stone platform.



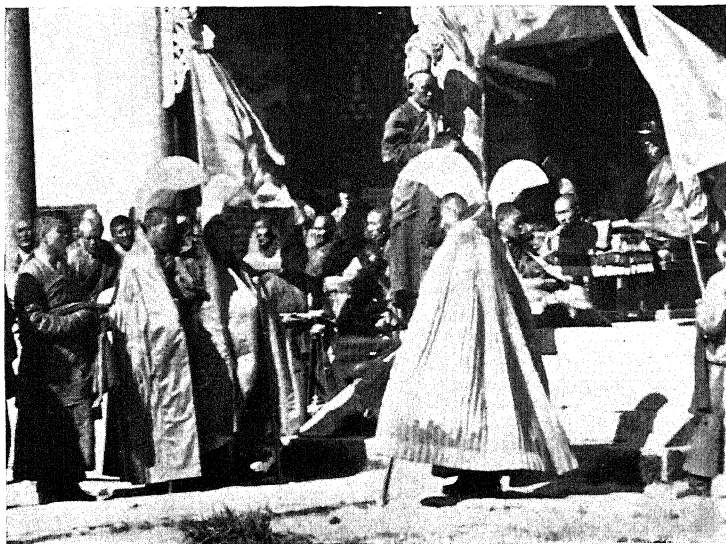
AN ITINERANT MONGOLIAN PRIEST. These priests wander through Mongolia and Thibet, begging for a living, and are a familiar feature of the Thibetan scene.



THE PROCESSION
to the lamasery
preceding the famous devil dance. Just before the dance began the sound
and picture apparatus was discovered, and the operators were driven
from the scene of festivities.



TYPES of young lamas, preparing for a lifetime in one of the great Thibetan
monasteries.



THE LAST STAND
of the roman

helmet: the costume of the lamas is curiously reminiscent of Rome, with its great cape and strange crested hat.



A SCENE that
only a color cam-

era could do justice to: blowing the great *gompa shawms* in the ceremonial procession. So loud are the horns shown here (being blown directly into the ear of patient novitiates) that they nearly disrupted the sound apparatus when it was moved too near them.



GETTING the musical instruments ready for the dance. Drums, cymbals, and horns are used. The music they produce is not soothing to the Occidental ear.



A YOUNG LAMA holding the end of one of the immense trumpets, collapsible, and known as *shawms*, used in festivals, and occasionally to welcome important visitors.

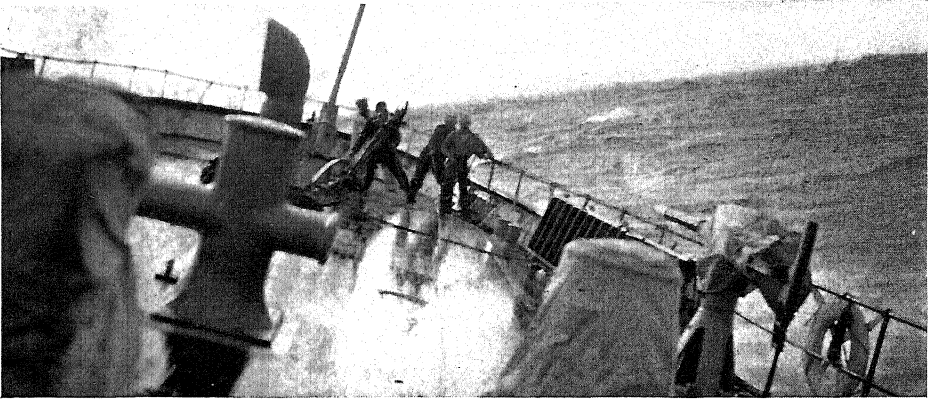


BEFORE THE TEMPLE PORTALS. The sound band on the left indicates a high, shrill sound—in this case the high-pitched voices of the natives and the shrill musical instruments.

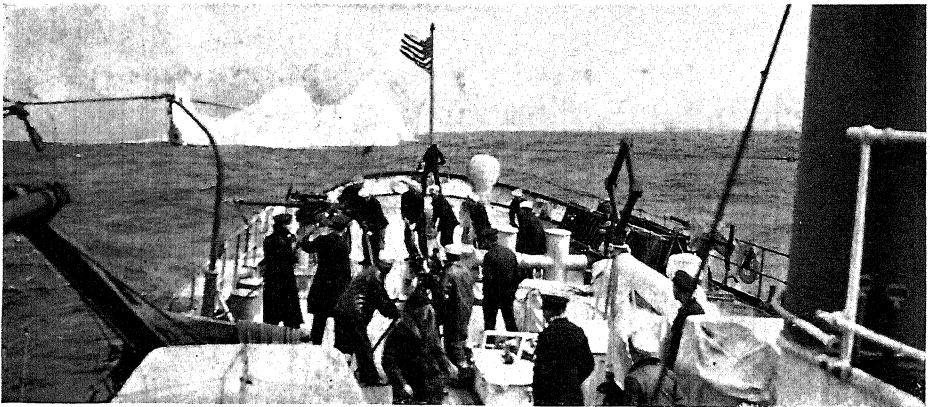


YOUNG LAMAS. As in the picture above, the sound band indicates a constant tumult. These young lamas watching the ceremonies and the camera-man at the same time are typical of the temple apprentices.

IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC WITH THE U. S. COAST GUARD

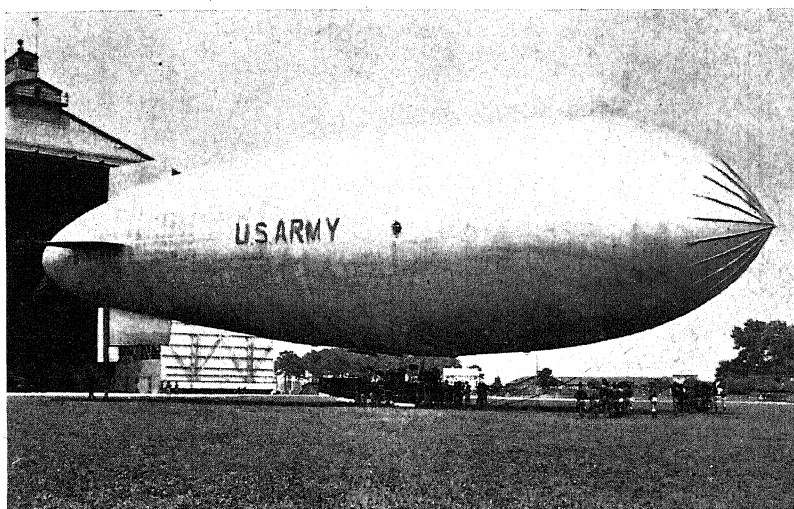


ABOARD THE CUTTER "MOHAVE." A cameraman, covering the Ice Patrol, sets up on the quarter-deck to catch the motion of the vessel as it plows through the arctic swells.

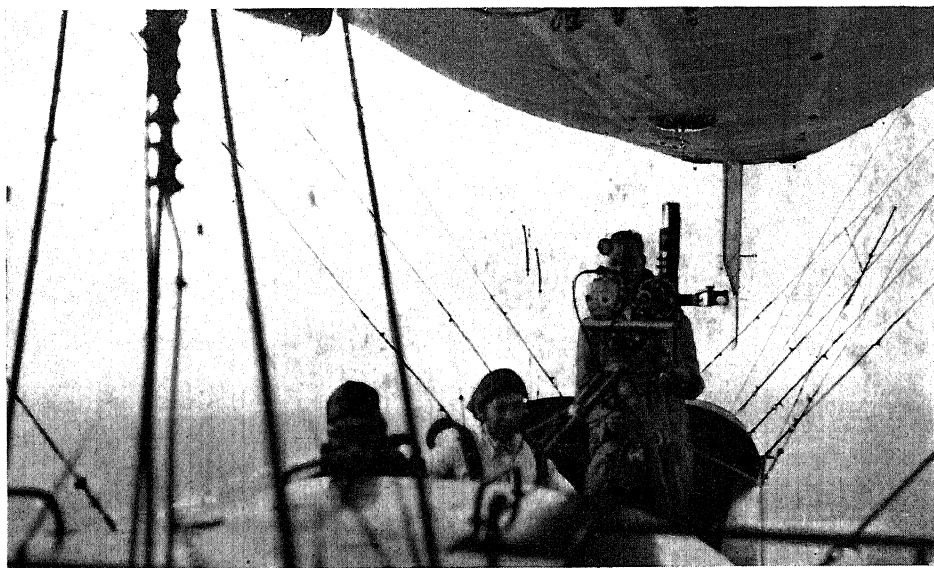


SPICK-AND-SPAN. Icebergs or not, the bosun keeps his men busy cleaning ship.

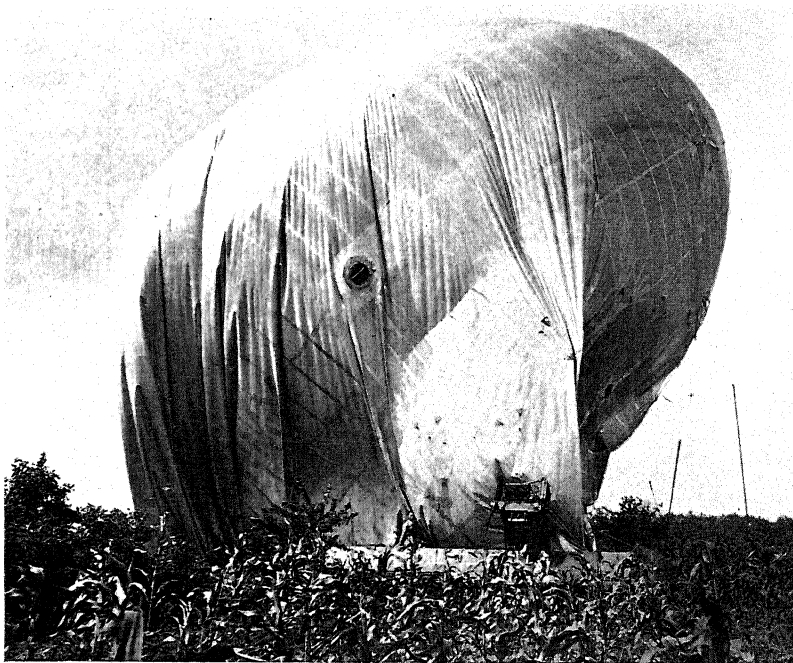
Uncle Sam's Coast Guard Service operates ships that are the last word in marine design and equipment. The personnel manning these vessels truly reflects the service motto "*Semper Paratus*." Many people are surprised to learn that the United States shares the cost of maintaining this splendid service with other European countries who have not a coast guard of their own. For the benefit of those who think that the Coast Guard's sole duty is to chase rum runners, let it be recorded that it is in the saving and protecting of life and property at sea that the Coast Guard fulfills its fundamental mission. The saving of life, salvaging of millions of dollars' worth of international shipping, ice patrolling, and even convoying in time of war, are only a few of the many duties that have been admirably handled by the service. In war or peace, a Coast Guard cutter is constantly in action.



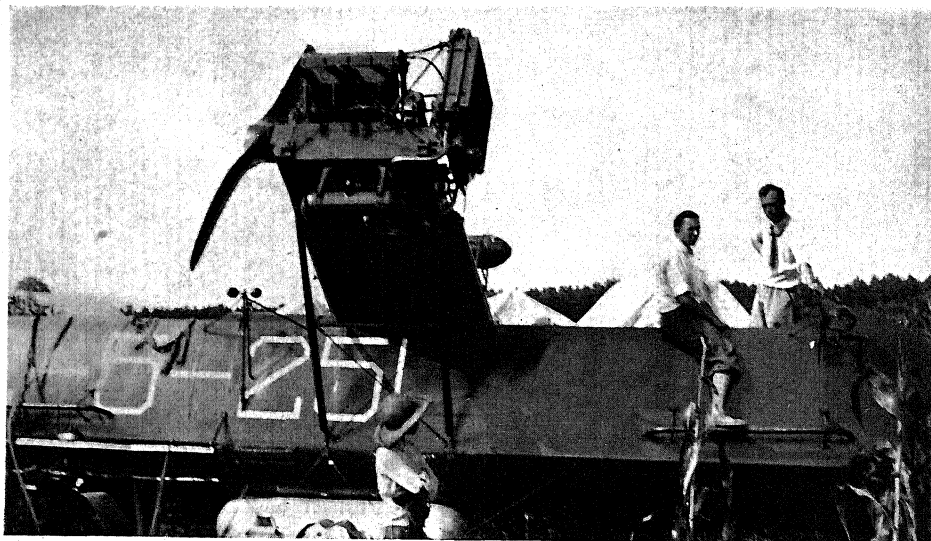
RARIN' TO GO. Having run the blimp out of its hangar, the ground crew is about to let go.



IN THE AIR. The U. S. Army takes a movietone camera aloft for its first blimp ride.



A FEW HOURS LATER—after a forced landing in a North Carolina cornfield.



A DISGUSTED NEWS CREW. Waiting for transportation back to civilization.

CHAPTER IX

With the Ice Patrol

CAREY had just come back from one of the most thrilling and dangerous jobs a newsreel man covers. Every spring a newsreel crew is detailed to sail with one of the United States Coast Guard cutters that annually sweep the area immediately north of the great steamer lanes in search of icebergs. It is their mission to destroy, or at least check, the course of the monster bergs as they drift down from the Arctic, carried along by the flow of the Labrador current. Carey had repeatedly, year after year, done that job, one of the nastiest on the beat. He told me why.

"Back in the old silent newsreel days, Eddie Reek, your present news editor, and myself were detailed by our respective companies to cover the Ice Patrol. It was my first big story, but Reek had made it before. I guess I amused him with my enthusiasm while we were making the long drive up to Halifax, where we were to board the cutter *Mojave*. It's a lousy trip at best, and after shovelling our way out of several mud holes and snowdrifts on the last few hundred miles I began to realize what an awful lot of missionary work was attached to that particular assignment.

"We arrived in Halifax on an April tenth, and after hours of searching finally located the piers where the patrol boats lay tied up. My heart sank when I saw what was going to be our home for the next few weeks on the stormy North Atlantic. The vessels of the patrol were about 240 feet in length. They had steel hulls, and had long years of valiant service behind them.

"Right on schedule the *Mojave* steamed out of the harbour. It was warm and a smooth running sea made it pleasant. We pushed along at about ten knots an hour, and after getting my sea legs (this was my first deep-sea trip) I really enjoyed it.

"Four days later, while standing on the flying bridge, I happened to note the Commander making some very careful observations. 'You boys had better get your cameras on deck,' he suggested in answer to my obvious curiosity. 'Are we getting near ice?' I inquired. 'No, Carey, but we are about to stand by to perform a duty which is directly connected with the motive for founding the Ice Patrol.' The officer's face was very grave as he spoke. 'On this spot,' he continued, 'Latitude 41°46' North and Longitude 50°14' West at eleven forty the night of April fourteenth, nineteen hundred and twelve, the steamer *Titanic* rammed into an iceberg.' Turning, he issued an order to the exec. 'Mr. Kendall, please have all hands muster on the quarter deck for the *Titanic* memorial service.'

"Reek and myself set up our cameras as the bosun's piping whistle summoned the crew aft. While the engines barely turned over, the commander delivered a benediction, and the crew stood at rigid attention. As we bowed our heads in silent prayer, we heard the lonely call of a sea bird sounding like the cry of a lost soul. After this, Taps was blown, and as the last sweet note trailed off across the restless waters a wreath of immortelles was cast over the taffrail. I have seen the ceremony many times since, and it has never failed to move me.

"That night our course was altered, and we headed north into the teeth of a howling gale. It was my first taste of seasickness. The little ship tossed and pitched incessantly; I could hear the wind scream and the water bound as it broke over the prow. Like a game little terrier the *Mojave* would bury her nose in the sea, shudder the length of her keel, then fairly leap out of the water.

"Never have I put in such a hellish night. Here we are, I thought, a thousand miles from shore and about to enter more perilous waters. What if we should scrape keel over some invisible growler? My imagination was working overtime. I could not blot the thoughts of the *Titanic* tragedy from my mind. I was in a funk and the fact of my illness didn't help matters any. Dawn found me awake and trembling in every limb. Reek, noticing my misery, kindly saved me from a joshing in the ward room by telling the Filipino boy to take some breakfast to my cabin. It was no go though, for I promptly lost it. I must have looked pretty unhappy when I stepped out on deck; even the sailors refrained from giving me a ribbing.

"It was a cold, foggy day, and the water had taken on a deeper tinge of green. Cautiously nosing her way through the murk, the *Mojave* blew her siren periodically. After each blast the crew would strain acute ears for echoes. That is one method by which bergs are located in foggy weather. The calculations are based on the fact that sound travels about one thousand and sixty feet per second at zero temperatures. Thus, counting the elapsed time between the original sound and its echo, making due allowance for weather conditions, of course, a fairly accurate idea of an unknown body's position can be determined. At frequent intervals the oceanographer would examine samples of water. In many instances, the salinity of it indicates the presence of ice. This went on for a week, in which time I recovered from my seasickness and fear.

"Not a particle of ice, however, had been raised. We were about at thirty-eight longitude and in the fifty-fifth parallel when the lookout cried: 'Growlers ahead!' Rushing up on deck we peered through the mists for a glimpse of the ice. Every so often big slabs would silently drift by. They seemed like phantoms as wisps of fog would trail and eddy about their bulk. A keen, piercing cold assailed my nostrils, and I realized it was the sensation old salts refer to when they speak of smelling ice. The normal tempo of the ship's life had changed. Wireless warnings were being flashed to other ships and the bosun was having the decks cleared for action.

" 'Here's where we get our preliminary stuff,' said Reek. 'They will shoot up some of the big growlers.'

"It seemed good to set up the old Akeley and to hear the whine of the gyro head as I tilted and panned the camera for a preliminary workout. All day we cranked as the gunners demolished the small bergs. This is not regular practice, but it gives the gun crew an excellent opportunity to try out their accuracy in sub-calibre shooting. They were certainly proficient. Nineteen direct hits out of twenty-two shells! Nightfall found us a tired and happy bunch. We stayed on deck for a long time watching the Northern Lights as they blazed and quivered overhead.

"Dawn broke crystal clear. Visibility good. Just as two bells chimed out, the executive officer passed me his telescope and said: 'Take a squint at that baby. Big as an armoury.' Once having located

it with the glass I could pick it up with my naked eye. Far to starboard a little speck dotted the horizon. The cutter was swung over, and in a short time we overhauled the iceberg.

"A monster, fully eighty feet high! Its sheer, smooth sides gleamed like polished alabaster, and a thousand graceful spires and minarets graced its crown. The sun's rays playing upon it created a shimmering, opalescent aura that contained every tone of the spectrum. An ivory cathedral surrounded by a sea of jade! But just such a berg, the skipper pointed out, had sunk the *Titanic*.

"After manœuvring for a favourable position, the gun sights of the major-calibre guns were trained on it. Using long telephoto lenses that we might better photograph the effects of the five-inch projectiles, we cranked away on the target. Those big guns have a terrific detonation, and the concussion raises havoc with a fellow's eardrums. Shell after shell found its mark, but except for dislodging an occasional spire or chipping off fragments, the attack left the icy fort uninjured. The gunnery officer eyed the berg critically. 'We'll have to dynamite her,' he said. Turning to a warrant officer he requested that mining supplies be brought from the magazine and two boats be launched. After reloading our cameras, we shifted to the port rail better to report the proceedings.

"Two small boats containing men and gear approached the berg. With the aid of a small harpoon gun, a light line was shot over the mass, and this in turn was used to haul back a heavy manilla rope. Attached to the end of this hawser was a steel grapnel which found a foothold in the crannies on top of the berg. This served as an anchorage for the mines, containing two hundred and fifty pounds of TNT each. These were attached to a point permitting them to be sunk to a level halfway between the surface of the water and the base of the berg. The proper depth is determined by estimating the exposed height of the ice, which in most cases represents one eighth of its bulk. Everything was squared away, and the coxswains piloted the boats to a safe distance, paying the detonating wire out as they went. A rapid exchange of wigwag signals passed between the boats. Then bunnnnnnnnng! A geyser of water shot hundreds of feet into the air.

"But when it had dissipated the iceberg could be seen serenely

floating along. A line of good old-fashioned sea-faring oaths made the air blue. It was the exec. 'Can't scuttle the brute,' he exclaimed. 'Call in the boats. We'll convoy the berg and send out positions. A few days, and it ought to be swinging back with the current or melting when we hit warmer waters. But we can't afford to take chances.'

"That night we rigged up a makeshift dark room and developed some test strips of negative with the aid of MQ tubes. We had been using some of the new panchromatic stock, and the results were marvellous. The composition of sea, iceberg, and clouds was made still better by the cameo-fine definition of the image. The combination of K2 filters and Pan film had worked swell.

"'All we need now is a few close-ups of the berg, and the story will be complete,' said Reek.

"For three days we steamed southward, keeping an eye on the berg. Realizing it would soon be lost to us, Reek and I hit upon a plan to get some unusually bold angles.

"The captain, though at first reluctant, agreed to furnish us with a small gig. Its size permitted the setting up of only one camera at a time. We agreed that we would take both our cameras along, and one would take shots while the other rowed. After tossing up a coin it was agreed that I would crank first as Eddie rowed out. After I got enough shots, I would take my camera down, and Reek would set up his and grind while I rowed.

"The sea was choppy, and I had difficulty in keeping my footing behind my camera. Eddie, meanwhile, had a hell of a time propelling the boat. Slowly we approached the frozen mass. Looking up at it from our angle it assumed terrifying proportions. Suddenly—with a sharp crack—a great piece broke off and sloughed into the sea. Our cockleshell bobbed wildly. Grabbing the gunwale, I knelt, transfixed with fear by the spectacle. The towering berg was breaking up, and it seemed as though its massive walls would topple upon us at any second. My knees caved in. I dropped to the bottom of the boat.

"But Reek, abandoning the oars and leaping toward my camera, trained the lens upon the berg and began cranking. Coolly he switched lenses and not until the last piece of ice had disappeared did he let up. Sinking wearily to a thwart, he turned to me and said:

"'Well, it looks as though I've lost a good story.'

"By this time I had regained my composure and managed to blurt out: 'What do you mean? You made it.'

" 'I know, but it was your camera, Bill.' (In the frenzy of working he simply had imagined it was his own.)

" 'Don't let's split hairs about that. You've earned it,' I remonstrated.

" 'Forget it, kid. Come on, it's getting cold, and if you're feeling up to it, let's be getting back to the ship.'

"Once aboard the *Mojave* I pleaded with Reek to take the negative, but he wouldn't do it. We were heading for Halifax to refuel and turn over the patrol to another cutter. At the same time Reek and myself were to return to New York.

"All the way back I tried to press the film upon him, but he refused it. That was a pal. The picture was a sensation with my office, and I know Eddie's outfit felt pretty bad about it.

"Now do you realize why I go on that assignment every year? I am always hoping to run into a tight place like that and do for some other newsreel man what Reek did for me. It is the only way I'll ever balance that account with myself."

I happened to be in Reek's office a few days later to arrange about a story and couldn't help mentioning the incident. He looked sort of sheepish for a moment, then said: "Aw—I'd have been as scared as Bill if I'd been standing there watching that big berg topple towards me instead of being so darned busy rowing the boat."

CHAPTER X

The Episode of the Blimp

PHIL DION—he grinds for us—called me up the other afternoon. Said he had something he wanted to show me. I promised to meet him soon as possible, and forty red lights later, I was being whisked skyward in one of those new, uncannily silent elevators that modern buildings affect.

Entering Phil's room, I found him, arms, akimbo, frowningly surveying a large rectangular case.

"Hullo," greeted my friend, not removing his eyes from the box. Upon opening, it revealed a huge air propeller whose tips were badly splintered.

"Where did you get that old relic?" I asked Phil as he instructed a couple of men to mount it over his mantel. "From the DO-X?"

"Nope."

"Wooden props are rare these days," I observed, puzzled at the trophy. "Is it from some famous plane of the past?"

"Nope. It's from a blimp," Dion replied with provocative reticence.

"Why the shattered ends?" I persisted. "I should think it would be a pretty handsome outfit if you'd have them cut off and the butts polished."

"Nothing doing!" he replied vehemently; then, making a wry face: "That pin wheel stays as is. A memento of a sad, sad experience."

"All right, all right," I said, knowing he was aching to tell it. "Let's have the sordid details."

"Chic, you know this game," Dion began. "Sometimes you're on top, hitting the reel every week; others, you just drag bottom and you're in the 'dog house.'"

"Go on," I grinned, "I've got the crying towel out."

"Bert Kerry, my partner, and I have just finished a bad session.

Our stories have lacked news value. For the past month we have been romping around deah ol' Virginny, but the old state hasn't kicked in with a decent foot of material since the Winchester Apple Blossom Festival. We were not feeling so forte.

"During dinner time, while perusing the local rag, my eye caught an item that promised an interesting lead. The army had just acquired a new blimp, the article read, and it was to be put in commission at Langley Field. It was further mentioned that the blimp would make its initial flight over Washington. That was enough for us. We checked out of the Robert E. Lee, waved toodle-oo to Lexington, and whipped it out over the Blue Ridges that very night for sleepy little Hampton.

"The next morning, on inquiring at the Operations Office, it was learned that we were none too soon. The flight was to be made that very day. I explained our desires to Captain Springs, the commanding officer of the blimp, and he phoned the War Department, procuring permission for us to go along. The ship was in the hangar at the time, and we went right to work. While I directed a detail in the loading of our equipment aboard the gondola, Bert explained something about movietone sound photography to the captain. The officer was very much interested in the recording lamp, attached to my camera, that transmits the sound impulse to the film. He was also impressed by the fact that the only connection between the recording amplifier and the camera is a light gauge, high-tension cable.

"Finally the blimp was loaded. I was set up in the foremost part of the gondola, commanding a full view of the works; Bert Kerry, my partner, was crouched over his amplifier in the extreme end of the body. Our relative positions did not matter, as conversation would have been impossible, what with two Hispano-Suizas revving up. A tiny light, actuated by a relay, indicated to my partner just when I would be shooting.

"Captain Springs ordered the field ballast dropped. Up we went in a long, lazy spiral. Circling the field, the ship climbed to an altitude of about fifteen hundred feet, dipped gracefully as she slid over Fort Monroe, then pointed her nose northwest, hitting a bee line right up Chesapeake Bay. It was a glorious October day; the visibility was very high; a strong breeze blew southward.

"Approaching the delta of the Rappahannock River, we hit a bumpy space of air, and I was looking around to steady myself when the blimp veered sharply as if to cross the bay. I couldn't reconcile this with the plotted course and looked inquiringly at Captain Springs. He seemed very much perturbed about something. Shedding his gauntlets, he made his way to the pilot and took over the controls. We began to yaw wildly; Springs was tugging at the wheel savagely. He struggled for a few moments, then, with a futile gesture, cut the throttles. The vibrant roar of the motors changed to a staccato cough; the captain cupped his hands and shouted towards me:

" 'Guess we'll have to cancel our joy ride. Look at that rudder.'

"I followed his glance as he turned and looked upward. The rudder was askew and visibly jammed. Just at that moment a strong gust of wind twisted the damaged fin from its hinges as though it were paper; the fabric ripped off, and a sharp corner of the exposed framework punctured the gas bag. I looked at the commander in dismay.

" 'No danger,' he assured me. 'We'll send a man aloft, and he'll fix the damage in no time.'

"Boy! Here's a real picture! I thought. I could visualize the title already: Daring Army Flyer Makes Repair In Midair.

"Focussing on the chap who had volunteered, I photographed him as he made his perilous way up the shroud lines. He placed an awful lot of confidence in those vulcanized anchorages. Reaching the rudder, he worked like a fiend to rectify the trouble; haste was important, as the gas was steadily flowing out of the rent in the envelope. Finally he looked down at us, shrugged his shoulders in a hopeless fashion, tilting his head to one side to indicate the futility of his efforts. The commander signalled him to retrace his way back to the gondola.

"By this time, owing to the strong, steady wind, we had drifted southwards considerably and were in the vicinity of Dismal Swamp. Captain Springs was consulting with the other officers; they seemed to agree on some point, and he then beckoned to me.

" 'We'll have to do some free ballooning,' the captain explained, when I reached his side. 'In a little while I figure we will be over one of those North Carolina cornfields, and when we are, I'll valve

out the remaining gas for a descent. There is no use trying to limp back to the home base.' He was quite casual about the whole matter. On asking him if there would be any danger, he smiled sort of grimly but assured me that outside of a good bump, we had an even chance of landing unscathed. I decided to keep right on grinding and give the office something real hot to look at. A forced landing of a blimp right from the pilot's perch!

"Just outside of a little town, which was identified as Murfreesboro, we spotted an ideal clearing. The captain cut the motor switch, and, with a grimace, yanked the rip valve cord. The ship settled down like lead. I could see a group of Negro workers looking up at us. Abandoning whatever they were doing, they dropped to their knees and crouched in terror of the big bag as it swooped down. At that, it must have seemed like an emissary of the devil to them, the flabby, half-deflated envelope making it all the more incomprehensible.

"The camera was still running, taking advantage of all this business. The ground seemed to be rushing up to meet us at a terrific speed; the car grazed the tree tops of a grove that bordered the field. I braced myself for the final jolt and waved to Bert. He seemed plenty excited.

"Crrrrrrraaaaaaaaaaaaaack! One corner of the gondola hit the ground; it careened and the left-hand motor prop was washed out. That is the one I've kept as a memento. We were scudding along in a crazy fashion, ripping, bouncing, and tumbling continuously, but finally the whole ship came to a grinding halt, and the big bag, now entirely deflated, billowed down upon us, draping itself fantastically.

"None of us was hurt, and after ascertaining that we were really human beings, the Negroes helped to extricate us from the wreckage. Captain Springs was swearing softly. He turned to us and said:

"Well—none of us is eligible for the Caterpillar Club yet.'

"On investigating, I found the camera intact. That tickled me no end. What a picture! Bert joined the group around the captain.

"How much damage do you estimate it is, Cap?" he asked.

"Oh—outside of that broken prop and a few struts, there isn't much to it,' the captain replied. 'But,' he added, 'the government is going to be a little fussy about losing all of that helium. It costs like——'

“‘Helium!’ ejaculated Bert, turning pale. ‘My God!’

“‘I looked up; he was mumbling to himself.

“‘What’s wrong, pal?’ I asked. ‘You look sick.’

“‘I am,’ he groaned, ‘I thought the bag was full of hydrogen, so back there, when the rudder poked a hole in the bag, I cut the sound line to the camera. I was afraid the juice would ignite the gas!’

“‘What? No sound?’ I asked.

“‘Not a whimper,’ he replied.

“‘When they brought me to, I asked Captain Springs for the propeller as a souvenir. Let it be a warning to all soundmen.’”

CHAPTER XI

The Episode of the Submarine

JOHN BOCKHORST, one of Metrotone's cameramen, is an adventurous devil. But he didn't have to go far from home to get one of the most gruesome thrills in his life.

"The day we arrived in New York from our Western trip," he said, in telling me about it, "the office was pinched for crews. The assignment editor said we had to hop right up to New London, Connecticut. A device designed to rescue the crew of a sunken submarine was going to be demonstrated. The inventor, Lieutenant Charles Momsen, met us on our arrival at the Sub-base and outlined the programme.

"An old submarine, reconstructed for the experiment, was to be used. Containing a skeleton crew of ten, it was to descend to the bed of the Thames River, and the men were to make their escape. A special hatch leading from the small compartment abaft the motor room was the exit. Assuming the sub is lying below the surface badly damaged, the following routine is observed: The crew rush to the safety compartment and batten the waterproof door, thus isolating themselves from the rest of the vessel. The escape hatch is opened, and the outside water is allowed to flow in. It merely rises to a level slightly above the hips, as the air pressure within counteracts the water pressure. Next, a yellow buoy, connected to a rope knotted at fathom intervals, is released. Any searching party on the surface can readily locate this buoy which also serves to mark the spot of the calamity. This being ascertained, they stand by to pick up survivors as they come to the surface. Down below, the crew prepares for the escape.

"The special device—'lung,' it is called—is donned. It consists of a rubber clip attached to the nostrils, and a mouthpiece connected to a receptacle containing a soda-lime compound. Its purpose is to purify the exhaled breath of the wearer that he may use it over again.

In this way he can leisurely guide himself up the buoy rope, counting the fathom knots as he ascends. An occasional halt helps him to decompress. Too rapid a rise would result in that dread malady, the 'bends.'

"We decided to do the outside shots first. A small launch was chartered to carry the sound outfit and camera out to where the sub was to be sunk. With a great deal of hissing and blowing the big hull made a vertical dive. I focussed on the spot where the buoy would probably appear. Sure enough, up it bobbed.

"'Buoy's up,' chanted one of the men in the tender assigned to act as a rescue boat.

"Finally, one of the sub's crew came popping up amid a froth of air bubbles. The rescue crew retrieved him. Removing the lung, he yelled over to me:

"'Say, this contraption's the business all right. Just like breathing on deck; no unpleasant effects at all.'

"This performance was repeated until the last man to leave the compartment made his appearance. He was the inventor, and right here I want to say he's a swell guy. Everyone at the Sub-base likes the cut of his jib, for he never allows a man to take a chance unless he himself is along.

"The outside shots being completed, we figured a scene from the interior, showing the men passing through the hatch, would be thrilling. The sub was brought to the surface and an inspection of the escape chamber revealed enough space in which to work. The movie-tone apparatus was set up on a high shelf running across the forward bulkhead of the compartment. Lieutenant Momsen, the officer in charge of the experiment, warned me to mount the camera high in order to escape the water. Incandescent lights lashed to stanchions, ourselves arrayed in bathing suits, everything was ready. We were going to show the public something new.

"With a reverberating boom the watertight door was shut. There were twelve of us in the little room. I might mention here that the officers operating the diving mechanism from the control room had no way of communicating with us during the tests. To open the barricaded door would mean to flood the main part of the submarine. A slight tremble ran through the hull. We were going down. I kept my

eye on a special panel of test meters that had been rigged up in the test chamber. The needle of the depth-reading instrument was steadily revolving as it indicated the number of feet we were descending. It's a funny thing about submarines; I've noticed it on other occasions. When you are below the surface penned up in that sweating steel shell you feel absolutely apart from the rest of the world. I dare say you could sink in New York Harbor yet feel you were a thousand miles from everyone. It was silent and damp, and the air had that heavy, oily odour peculiar to all undersea craft. With a gentle bump we hit bottom. The needle pointed at ten fathom or sixty feet. I noticed the sub rested with the stern tilted slightly upward.

"Fernandez, my soundman, said the sound outfit was working okay. Lieutenant Momsen watched me for the signal to start. I snapped on my camera switch and motioned him, and at the cue he moved the lever of an air valve. With a hollow hiss the air flowed into the chamber, and the air-gauge indicator quivered through its gradations. Five, ten, fifteen pounds were registered in short order, and I could begin to feel the effects upon my eardrums. One of the men nervously stumbled over a heavy spanner wrench, and as it skidded across the steel deck plates it gave off a high-pitched, tinny clink. That is a common effect of high air pressure. The human ear becomes insensitive to low frequencies.

"It won't be long now," wisecracked a hard-boiled looking gob, and we all chuckled at his look of amazement upon hearing his own voice. He had changed from a husky baritone to a fairy-like soprano.

"At the twenty-eight-pound mark, Momsen snicked the air valve shut, issuing a terse command at the same time. Two men rapidly spun the clamp wheels operating the escape hatch; it opened slowly, and in poured tons of water. Lord, it was cold! It soon reached our hips, and I could feel the air pressure building up more and more as the in-pouring water compressed the air space. Number one man to go adjusted his lung, turned towards the camera for a full-faced shot, then passed through the hatch. As he left, more water swirled in, and I could feel it rise a trifle. The second man left, then the third.

"I was so engrossed in photographing the performance that I had not noticed that the water was continually rising. When I first realized this fact it was level with my chest. I became concerned. If

more water entered every time a man left, it would soon reach the camera. At the ninth man it did. Six thousand dollars' worth of Bell and Howell was about to go blooey. I shouted to Momsen, but at the same time a peculiar coughing sound from Fernandez made me look at him. His face was white, and he was gesticulating wildly.

"‘The batteries,’ he gasped, ‘the recording batteries. The salt water has reached them, and they are generating chlorine gas!’

"‘This was real danger. Just at that moment the lights dimmed, then sputtered out. We were chin deep in water by now. Something was radically wrong. A word with Lieutenant Momsen revealed that the sub could not be floated in less than twenty minutes, as it would take that long to blow the tanks and attain the buoyancy necessary to raise the hull with its one water-logged compartment. Regarding the excess water, he felt that the fact that the sub was on uneven keel accounted for it.

"‘My nostrils began to tingle. The gas was getting in its horrible work. Fernandez floundered to the aft end of the cubicle away from the deadly batteries. Poor fellow, he was choking and coughing horribly. Right about then I decided I preferred a tight place in a plane. At least you have an awful lot of air, and one can bail out with a ‘chute if necessary.

"‘Momsen was quite cool. ‘Follow me,’ he ordered. There was a note of assurance in his voice. Linking hands, we waded towards him. The effort to move was becoming almost superhuman, so awful was the condition of the remaining air. The officer snapped on an emergency light mounted in the top of the hull; opening a locker, he pulled out three of his precious ‘lungs.’ I hadn’t paid much attention to how they were attached but, following Momsen’s lead, I made a pretty good job of it.

"‘Haste was imperative, for by now we were treading water, and a scant eleven inches of air space remained. Ducking under the apron that protruded from the escape hatch, we wasted no time in evacuating the chamber. The surface crew picked us up and after a little first aid we were okay. Fernandez was a little slow in reviving, as he had been late in attaching his ‘lung.’ The inventor came over to us.

"‘I’ll bet you’re glad the navy requires an emergency supply of “lungs” in every submarine, aren’t you?’ he said.

“‘And how!’ I exclaimed; but I didn’t tell him that I’d held my breath all the way to the surface.

“When the sub finally emerged, we went aboard to inspect the damage. It was a mess. The camera was a total loss, and the film a sodden, useless roll of celluloid.”

“That sure was a tough break,” I said, as Bocky finished. “After all that grief you didn’t get a picture.”

“Hell, yes!” he answered. “We sent for another outfit and finished the damn thing the next day.”

CHAPTER XII

The King's Armada

RUSSELL MUTH, one of the first American cameramen to work abroad, has had a raft of experiences. Here is one that he told me on a charabanc from Croydon to London:

"It was just after the big fracas. There was going to be a great naval show at Spithead. For the first time since the signing of the Armistice His Majesty was officially going to review the fleet. Over two hundred warships were scheduled to be in the show. I was new to England, so I waded right into the War Office and requested the customary permission. The Admiralty officials politely but firmly announced that absolutely no motion pictures could be taken during the review. That was final. They added that they did not care a hoot about my home office's desires and reminded me that any attempt to procure the picture by *sub rosa* methods would result in serious consequences for me.

"But New York wanted that picture badly, and it was up to me to produce. I studied the problem from numerous angles. To do the job from a launch was out of the question. Trying to get anything from a land angle would have been silly. Then an idea hit me. Why not fly? I hopped a cab to the Flying Club, where I bumped into a couple of pilots I'd known from war days. They had flown me over the lines for pictures more than once. I buttonholed them concerning the proposition. They listened politely enough but failed to register any enthusiasm; said it would be indiscreet. Tapping me on the forearm, they advised me to forget it and suggested that I join them in a drink. Over the highballs I reiterated my wishes.

" 'It's not done, old bean,' protested one solemnly. 'A chap can't really fly, as it were, into the very faces of the Brass Hats, y'know. Come along, be a good fellow.'

" 'What you birds need is a proper appreciation of news value,' I argued.

“‘Grant you that, Russ,’ conceded the other, ‘but this is different. England has always observed a conservative news policy concerning such things and more so when the royal family is involved. Ask Tracey or myself anything else, and we’ll be glad to accommodate you, even to putting on a bally air show, but don’t ask that. My word, think of Downing Street!’

“‘Stymied! Thanking them, I turned to go. And there was—Sir Alan Cobham. I had covered every important flight he had made from the first day he loomed up in the public eye.

“‘Hello, Russ,’ he said. ‘What’s up? Join me in a spot?’

“‘Back at the bar I explained my trouble.

“‘It is sort of a problem at that, isn’t it, old man?’ he murmured, tugging at the lobe of his ear and frowning. He asked me a few questions about the affair, then fell silent for a moment and studied his glass.

“‘Tell you what,’ he remarked, suddenly looking up. ‘You toddle out to Croydon to-morrow and hunt me up. And by the way,’ he added with the suggestion of a wink, ‘you might bring your camera along.’

“‘I went back to my Piccadilly hotel, where I went over my camera and loaded the magazine with fresh film.

“‘I reached Croydon airdrome about noon of the next day with the camera disguised as hand luggage. I’d left the tripod in town; I didn’t need it for a plane set-up. After a little hunting I found Cobham’s hangar. He was engrossed in vetting the rigging of his ship when I popped in on him, but he turned the job over to his two mechanics and cautiously led me outside.

“‘I’ve decided to fly you,’ he said, ‘but on one stipulation.’

“‘What’s that?’ I asked.

“‘You must keep your camera under cover until we are in the air. Do you think you will be able to set it up then?’

“‘Sure,’ I replied.

“‘Cobham sent the mechanics off on some fool errand. Then he helped me stow my gear in the aft cockpit of the plane. The ship was ideal for photographic work; a two-place job with a machine-gun scarf ring mount on the aft position. This, as you know, makes a perfect mount for a camera, and I noticed Cobham had removed the regular stream-line fairing from the turtleback to allow me a clear

sweep with the camera. By the time the two mechos returned, everything was in readiness, and after a few minutes of warming up on the line, we took off for Southampton.

"Once in the air, I began setting up the camera, and it wasn't until after fifteen minutes of tussling that I had it secured to the mount. The slip-stream from the prop was terrific, and several times the camera was nearly torn from my grasp by the wind. I rode backward with my feet braced on the longerons. The seat served as a space to hold extra film magazines.

"We flew over Aldershot, and I marvelled at the quaint little villages and carefully laid out farms. Here and there I could even spot the white balls flying over golf courses or cricket greens.

"Within forty-five minutes we raised Southampton and, making altitude to give me a better view of the layout, Cobham approached the Solent at about three thousand feet. Every detail of the formation was visible, for it was a marvellous camera day. Stretched out in a long line between the mainland and the Isle of Wight, the pride of Great Britain rode at anchor. Every type of vessel was represented, from monster battle wagon to sleek sub-chaser; all proud in glistening peace-time gray, so welcome after years of war camouflage. Never had there been such a display of naval power.

"Seeking out some particular feature to start my story, I spotted His Majesty's yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, by its distinctive double stacks and the familiar yellow and red standard of sovereignty flying from its fore peak. I tapped Cobham's shoulder and indicated the vessel; he looked down, nodded, then cut his motor. Giving her a little rudder, he allowed the plane to bank slightly. That boy is a cameraman's delight. We slipped in slowly, my pilot whipping the ship around every time he thought his wing end was cutting into the picture. I managed to consume a full magazine of film on the yacht before Cobham had to pick up flying speed.

"Cobham, looking over his shoulder and seeing me grin, wrinkled at me through his goggles, then set the throttle at a slow cruising speed for the run along the length of the armada. Through my finder as I cranked I could see the rows of sailors standing at rigid attention. From my viewpoint I knew the camera was catching every detail of the spick-and-span ships. Just to polish off the job and give me an

opportunity to make some cut-in shots, my pilot nosed the plane down to about five hundred feet for a few tight spirals around the larger ships. That is risky business but Cobham is a wow at aërobatics. We came perilously close to the masts of the flagship. I noticed the O. D. studying us through his binoculars. He must have spotted the camera, for he became excited. The next thing I knew a tiny hydroplane was catapulted from the vessel's deck.

"Cobham noticed the machine at once. He banked off sharply to the right and gave her the gun for all she was worth. Then the crafty devil hit for shore, clinging close to ground to take advantage of the rolling contours. The pursuing water plane, seeing it was getting over territory that would mean trouble in case of a conked motor, gave up the chase. Cobham kept low for awhile, then headed for Avro Field near Southampton.

"My plan was to land near the Cunard piers and ship the negative aboard the *Aquitania*. You may imagine my consternation upon seeing the big liner already in midstream. We rolled to a stop, and I was about to tell Cobham that I might as well return to Croydon with him when I noticed that the *Aqui* was not moving. Then I realized what it was all about. She would have to wait until the Royal yacht had finished its cruise of inspection before she could proceed to the open sea. There still was hope.

"Waving a farewell to Cobham and telling him that I would see him back in town, I ran down to the shore in search of a boat to take me alongside the big steamer. Luckily a small rowboat happened to be tied up to the stringpiece in front of the Avro plant, and in short order I was shouting up to a curious deck steward, asking him for a line. He complied readily enough at the sight of a pound note, and soon the four magazines, with hastily scrawled instructions to the purser, were being hauled over the side.

"I returned in the handy craft and stood on the wharf, watching the liner. Soon a jet of steam burst from its whistle, and big gouts of foam raced back from the stern. As the whistle reverberated across the water, I heaved a sigh of relief. The *Aquitania* was getting under way, and my precious film was safe.

"On the ride up to London via the Southern Railroad I relaxed and ordered tea. Yes, tea. The train wheezed into Waterloo Station

about five o'clock, and after filing a cable off to the office about the story, I went over to my hotel with the idea of turning in.

"When I asked for my mail at the Keys and Letters desk, the clerk regarded me with a queer mixture of fear and awe. 'Oh, Mr. Muth,' she said apologetically, 'please, sir, the telephone 'as been a-ringin' somethin' orful for you this past hour. Hit's a Mr. Jason as wot's been callin', and, beggin' yor pardon—'e says you are to go right over to Bow Street Station the livin' minute you comes in. I 'ope it isn't serious, sir?'

"'Caught!' I groaned, not giving a thought to the look of horror that spread over the girl's face as she heard me speak. She must have imagined me guilty of mayhem and murder.

"It wasn't but a few minutes before I was in the presence of three stony-faced individuals who presided over the aliens' department at the famous police station opposite Covent Garden. Jason was in charge. 'Now, Mr. Muth,' he began sternly, fixing me with the most piercing eyes I've ever seen, 'what have you to say for yourself? You have committed a serious breach of faith, and under the laws of the Empire you may be deported.'

"I have a great deal of respect for the Metropolitan Police, and seeing that they had the right dope, I admitted the subterfuge. This appeased them somewhat, and after a short time a member of the C. I. D. came in to inform me that I was to accompany him to New Scotland Yard. He was affable enough, and during a halt in traffic as the little gray departmental car threaded Trafalgar Square, he told me how Cobham, upon landing, had been detained and compelled to divulge the whereabouts of the owner of the camera found in his plane; his license number had been noted; they also knew the name of the vessel I had shipped the film in. Those boys sure are the essence of efficiency. There was one thing, however, that comforted me—the English people's inherent love of fair play. I felt that a proper presentation of my case would prejudice them in my favour. After all, I reflected, looking back on the situation, I had not photographed anything of war-time significance; I had merely got around a barrier which to my way of thinking had been unreasonable.

"Down at the Yard I was ushered before several distinguished-looking gentlemen, who, upon being introduced, proved to be mem-

bers of the British Admiralty. In grave tones they stressed the seriousness of my offense and announced that, unless the film was returned undeveloped, a national embargo would be placed upon all future film showings of my company in Great Britain. They had me checkmated there. I requested permission to cable my office regarding the situation, and after composing the message under a censor's eyes I was permitted to leave.

"True to the terms, the film was returned to England, and I personally placed it in the hands of the Admiralty Board. It was developed under naval guard, and I was ordered to be at the screening.

"That show was going to decide my fate. You should have seen the rank that was there. More gold-braided officers and M. P.s than you could shake a stick at, and from their expressions I began to have visions of Old Bailey and the long walk to the hangman's scaffold. For me, at least, the atmosphere was tense. When the picture was projected I sat on my hands with fingers crossed. If I do say so myself, the stuff was not bad, and sneaking a glance at the audience I gathered that they were enjoying the show.

"When the lights went up, the head of the Admiralty Board of Investigation called me to his side. He seemed to be having a tough time being severe, and after several deep-throated coughs he reprimanded me for taking matters into my own hands.

"‘You may have your film back,’ he finished, ‘but see to it that the scenes I have noted on this piece of paper be deleted.’ I took the film and note, thanking him for his kindness. I was overjoyed at the vindication and lost no time in reshipping the negative to New York; this time through the regular customs channels. Deep down in their hearts I think the government officials rather enjoyed the situation. It had appealed to their sporting instinct; they had been fairly outwitted, and they realized it. They likewise let Cobham off with a reprimand.

"It was darn nice of them. They are sportsmen. And they have always given me a fair break in getting pictures ever since.

"And do you know what scenes they cut? It's a secret, but what they cut was a couple of close-ups of the English Channel without a ship in sight."

CHAPTER XIII

The Pope Takes a Walk

BILL JORDAN, soundman to Ettore Villani, our staff man in Italy, told this about a newsreel man's difficulties in Rome. "It was during the ceremonies celebrating the signing of the Concordat between the Papal government and Mussolini. All negotiations had been consummated by Cardinal Gasparri, and after the Pope put his signature to the document it was announced that His Holiness would set foot upon Italian soil: the first of the popes to do so since eighteen seventy.

"You can of course realize the news significance of such an event. Aside from the historic angle, it offered an opportunity to photograph a most gorgeous ecclesiastical procession. The quaintly uniformed Swiss Guard, the Noble Guard, and the Palatine Guard Band were all to take part in the show. With choir boys immaculate in lace surplices, churchmen swinging censers, priests arrayed in all the finery of vestment and scapular, intoning their chants as they deliberately proceeded, it was to be a mighty demonstration marking the termination of the Popes' long, voluntary incarceration.

"Villani, with typical Latin enthusiasm, rushed me over to old Rome for a survey of the location. St. Peter's Basilica (often erroneously called Cathedral) stands at the head of the Piazza San Pietro. Extending out from each wing of the church are two double colonnades of travertine which embrace the plaza. These form, with the façade of St. Peter's, a huge stone circle whose periphery is broken only at the point diametrically opposite the basilica, thus permitting passage between the Piazza San Pietro and the neighbouring Piazza Rusticucci which is under Italian jurisdiction. It was in the latter square the Pope proposed to take a few steps after walking under the right colonnade. At this site he was to bestow his benediction upon

the great audience gathered there to do him homage, then return via the left colonnade directly to the Vatican Palace.

"It promised to be a set-up for us until one of the Metropolitan, or city police, recognizing us from past stories, stepped forward with the rather disconcerting information that absolutely no cameras, still- or motion-picture, would be permitted to operate during the ceremony. He could not enlighten us as to where the order had originated. We knew it would be futile to argue the point, so, promising to obey the edict, we sauntered across the square to a little sidewalk café, where, over a bottle of wine, we racked our brains in an effort to evolve a plan by which we might obtain the picture *sub rosa*. It just had to be made. Idea after idea was rejected, and it began to look as though we were checkmated, when Villani, who was glumly viewing the surroundings, happened to fasten his eyes upon a building situated several doors away. His eyes lighted.

"*'Per Bacco! . . . I have it!'* he cried, getting up. 'In that house over there a friend of mine lives. What you call the pal. Come, Bill, we must pay him a visit.'

"I trailed after him, and in a few minutes we were ushered into the presence of a tall, aristocratic-looking gentleman, whom I shall call Signor Callistro. With true Roman fervour he greeted Villani warmly, and, after the usual flowery inquiries as to each other's health, Ettore made known our predicament. Signor Callistro listened attentively. When my partner had finished, our host walked over to a broad window, drew back the drapes, and said: 'Will this meet your requirements?' We looked out. A splendid view of the two plazas was revealed.

"'Superb!' beamed Villani. 'Will it be agreeable?'

"'Quite. When do you wish to come in?' was the Signor's response.

"'To-morrow night, if possible,' we said. 'It's easier at night. Then we can set up our equipment at leisure the next day.'

"'I shall notify the servants accordingly.'

"'Remember. It is best you warn them to keep a close tongue,' cautioned Villani.

"'To be sure. If for no other reason than my personal safety,' our benefactor agreed.

"The next evening we transferred the movietone outfit from its

regular truck to a couple of cabs. There were eight separate units weighing anywhere from twenty to ninety pounds. Villani rounded up three tough-looking thugs to act as porters. Piling them into the second car, he instructed the driver to follow us. We were in high spirits as we bowled along the main thoroughfare leading to the Piazza Rusticucci.

"Suddenly, with a screech of rapidly applied brakes, our car jolted to an unceremonious halt. The chauffeur pointed to the roadway, at the same time letting loose a string of highly uncomplimentary Sicilian oaths. Imagine our consternation upon seeing a deep, broad trench dug completely across the highway. No vehicle could possibly breach the gap.

" 'Try some other route,' Villani ordered impatiently.

"Down another street we rolled, and this time we were blocked by an imposing fence which bore evidences of having been recently erected. Street after street was explored, but all presented the same obstacle. Just as we were about to call it a day, our driver found an alley where the fence did not quite block entry; with a little gear shifting he mounted the sidewalk and managed to squeeze the cab past the obstruction. Once again we rumbled along, and upon reaching a point just around the corner from Callistro's apartment, Villani ordered the cars to halt.

" 'I will go ahead to receive the apparatus, Bill,' he said. 'You issue it, but do not let one man carry too much at a time.'

"Giving Ettore time to reach the house, I doled out the units to our helpers and bade them stroll along casually, as though carrying personal luggage. Everything went smoothly, though my heart skipped a beat or two when the last load, consisting of tripod and batteries, went up the street. The unusual shape of these, I felt, would certainly attract the attention of any suspicious police officer. No one was encountered, however, and upon Villani's return with the information that the stuff was secreted in a closet, we sped back to our part of town exultant that our ruse had worked.

" 'To-night I will load the camera magazine with fresh film. Then I'll disguise it as an ordinary parcel, and we will take it to the house, set it up, and await results. Meet me at the little café in the morning. *Se Vedemo*,' said Ettore as I left him.

"Bright and early the next day I arrived at our rendezvous, but it was a scowling Villani who greeted me. 'What's up?' I asked.

"'More trouble,' was his disgusted reply as he carefully looked around. 'The place is alive with the Agenti [secret service men] and every doorway on the square is guarded by the Carabinieri. They inspect the minutest package carried into any house. What chance have we with that?' he growled, indicating the magazine wrapped up in brown paper. It was quite sizable, being about twenty-four inches long.

"'But we've got to get it through.'

"'Yes . . . yes. Have you a suggestion?' was his disgruntled reply. 'With my own eyes have I seen twenty or more cameras confiscated, and every one of the opposition is wailing that his outfit is tied up inside the local police station.'

"'We've gone this far,' I insisted. 'There must be a solution.'

Beer after beer was consumed as we plotted and connived. Boom! went the noon gun on Janiculum Hill; the midday chimes rang out their individual melodies. The sound only helped to enhance our gloom. Time was flying, and soon the procession would commence. A soft voice interrupted our thoughts.

"'Would the signori care to buy a holy medal?' We looked up, annoyed at the intrusion. It was one of those peddler boys you see cycling about the plaza. Attached to the handlebars of his wheel was a wire basket filled with the good luck tokens of St. Bartholomew. Studying the bicycle for a moment, Villani's face brightened.

"'Come here, comrade,' he called to the vendôr, tinging his words with a benign quality. The boy approached. 'Have a seat. No? Well then, what is your name?'

"'Angelo, sir,' answered the boy.

"'Angelo. Hmmm. That is a nice name. How would you like to earn ten lire, Angelo?'

"'Certainly I would. But how can one do so honestly?'

"'It is honest money I offer,' vowed Ettore, significantly jingling some coins. The gamin's curiosity was aroused by now, and he accepted the proffered chair.

"'All you will have to do is to fasten this package to a rope which I will drop from that side window over there,' explained Villani,

pointing to the innocent-looking magazine. 'Then you are through.'

" 'But the Carabinieri!' protested the boy. 'What about them? How is one to carry . . .'

" 'Simple. Let me show you.' Hiding his actions from any idler, my partner scooped up the medals in Angelo's basket, placed the film magazine in the bottom, then spread the metal discs over the precious package. 'You see,' he smiled. 'No one will ever suspect.'

"The boy studied the matter for a moment, then agreed to help us. Villani handed over the bribe and wasted no time in getting to Calistretto's apartment. I stayed behind to make sure there would be no slip.

"Keeping a wary eye out for the rope, Angelo resumed his peddling. I noticed the line being payed out. Our ally saw it at the same moment and bicycled towards the house. Just before dismounting, however, Angelo turned his head to see if the police were watching. That act was his undoing, for his front wheel struck the curb, glanced off, and down crashed Angelo, medals and magazine in a heap.

" 'We're ruined,' I groaned. Villani, in the window, was holding his head and mouthing maledictions. Angelo, however, was up to the emergency. Grabbing up the magazine, he scooted across the sidewalk and attached it to the rope. Up it swung, bobbing and jerking wildly as it was hauled in. It was just within Villani's reach when the knot Angelo had hastily made began to slip. Ettore, seeing the danger, reached out to clutch the magazine, but too late. Down came the troublesome unit straight for the unfortunate Angelo. He was still standing below, peering around. It struck him square on the head.

" '*Dio Santo!*' he yelled, running away. Taking advantage of the commotion he caused as he went down the street, I raced over, re-attached the magazine to the rope, and this time it held. But if the Carabinieri had ever caught me . . . !

"A few minutes later, after having regained my composure, I entered the house. Reaching the second-story landing, I was about to walk into the apartment when the sound of angry voices arrested me. I could hear Villani arguing vehemently.

" 'But I tell you this is not motion-picture apparatus!' he was shouting.

" 'Come now,' rasped a second voice, 'why do you beat about the

bush? You were seen by one of the Agenti hauling a mysterious package up the side of this building.'

"'I know nothing about it,' insisted Villani. 'This material is part of an American wireless set. A gift to Signor Callistro.'

"Another voice broke in. Its tone was ominous. 'If you persist in denial it will go hard with you. You are caught red-handed. Who was your accomplice? Where is he?'

"It was only then that I realized what a tough spot I was in. Discovery would mean arrest, and I could not fool them as to my nationality. Being an American and involved in the affair would probably mean deportation. Such action would have materially affected our company at that time, for there were few men in Europe familiar with sound-recording apparatus.

"Here is where I take a run-out powder, I thought, staying long enough to hear Villani finally admit the conspiracy. He also realized the situation. I tiptoed below, deciding it would be wise to stay under cover for a while. Back at the little café once again, I hailed the waiter. '*Due birre, per favore,*' I said, indicating the desire for a couple of beers. Now what? I wondered, thoughtfully sipping the brew.

"The answer was not long in coming, for out of Callistro's house poured an army of police officers. They were gesticulating wildly and milling around Villani, who was no less agitated. Finally, with a hopeless shrug, he went back into the house, then reappeared, lugging his camera case. Escorted by one of the *Metropolitani*, he struggled down the street with the unwieldy box. Not a soul offered to help him with his burden. I dared not. There is a police station about two blocks away from the *Piazza Rusticucci*, and that was *Ettore's* destination. After a short delay he returned to Callistro's, still under guard.

"Great Scott! I thought to myself, I hope they are not going to make him carry all that stuff to the station house single-handed. Sure enough, it was true. Piece by piece poor Villani trundled the apparatus off to the jail house. They had carried out their threat to sequester all such outfits until after the show."

Jordan paused and sighed. Then he added: "Anyway, none of the opposition got any shots either."

CHAPTER XIV

Big-Time Bombing

THERE is no doubt that the airplane will be a most important factor in the next war, and though anti-aircraft fighting devices have been developed apace with aërial war machines, the ever increasing speed of planes promises to beat down all arguments that ground forces can discourage raids. After all, guns require manning, and it is obvious that the human element cannot cope with a situation where a surprise attack can be consummated within three minutes. Not to mention what future developments in speed will be.

In the fall of 1930, while covering bombing manœuvres at Kelly Field, San Antonio, with Johnny Bockhorst (I was pinch hitting for his regular partner) we saw a striking example of high-speed bombing run off for the benefit of the United States Ordnance Department. The Third Attack Group, commanded by Major Davenport Johnson, had flown up from Fort Crockett, Galveston, to participate in the unusual event. Eighteen obsolete observation planes, both DeHaviland and Douglass built, had been set out to represent ships on the line of an enemy war-time airdrome. The locale was Camp Stanley Reservation; within its confines is a valley surrounded by low hills, and this was the spot selected to hide the old ships. They were placed in two rows of nine, facing each other. Rigged according to regulations, a supply of gas in their tanks and apparently ready to take off, they were to be bombed by the Attack Group from a low altitude. That is one of the tactical strategies of the Attack Group; it flies low to take advantage of the terrain's contours, drops its bombs quickly, then is away before retaliatory measures can be taken.

As we were studying the range for a set-up, the commanding officer warned us that it would be unwise to work near the target planes because of the danger of bomb fragments. That was obvious, but the

fact remained that close-ups were the only worthwhile angles of such a spectacular show. Such shots serve a dual purpose in the motion-picture industry. Besides being interesting newsreel material, they make excellent cut-in shots for production of feature pictures. More than one movie has contained clips from news stories; they lend an authentic touch to the plot. The nearest point of safety happened to be a good thousand feet away; it was a stout oaken barricade to be used by the officers appointed to observe the effects of the bombardment from close range. We were welcome to work from there, but so far as a camera location was concerned, it was out.

"How about building a bombproof around your camera at the spot you think best, and then operating it by remote control from the officers' observation point?" asked Captain Perry Wainer. He commands the Communications Section of the Thirty-third Squadron, and being an electrical man he was familiar with the general principle of sound photography and the fact that the cameras are operated by electric motors.

"If you can tell me where I can find the necessary wire and relays, I can work it out," I answered.

"Be glad to accommodate you from the Section's stock of radio parts," replied the captain. I enumerated the required materials, and a man was detailed to draw them from the stockroom. While waiting, we selected a spot about three hundred feet from the row of target planes, then went to work. After setting up the camera and sound equipment, a heavily timbered housing was built over the top and sides of the outfit; the front protection was solved by employing a discarded grading scoop, such as you've seen drawn by a single horse. Taking it to a near-by Mexican machine shop, we had a three-inch hole cut through its double steel bottom with an oxy-acetylene torch.

Back on location we set it up, sighting the lens through the hole. It made an excellent barrette. By this time the messenger had returned with the electrical parts, and I assembled the circuit. One relay was inserted into the camera motor circuit to be operated by closing a knife switch at the officers' observation post, at the same time another relay was to turn on the recording amplifier. By the time I had finished running the parallel wire between the two points I was pretty well scratched up by cactus and mesquite.

My helper, a big, raw-boned Texan, had been eyeing the proceedings with interest. Shifting his plug of "chewin'" to one side of his jaw, he addressed me:

"Yo-all want to be right cyarful 'bout the way yo' go traipsin' around yeah, stranger."

"How come?" I asked.

"Nothin' much," he continued, grinning mirthlessly, "'ceptin' this yeah spot is plomb full o' rattlers, and from thair buzzin' I reckon they mought be a mite riled by all this commotion." Thinking back, I did recall having heard a queer, dry buzzing sound while tramping through the field with the wire. "Don' worry, though," soothed the Southerner. "Just yo' mind yo' own business 'n' they'll mind thairs." Nevertheless, from then on I stepped warily.

Bockhorst planned to cover the bombing from the air; he had brought a silent camera along for that purpose. I made a preliminary test of the electrical hook-up, noted that it worked satisfactorily, then joined the two observation officers at the barricade.

A field telephone tinkled. Lieutenant Lee, the officer who was to advise the birdmen that the range was clear, took the message. Turning to Lieutenant Wheeler, his co-worker, he checked his wrist watch for accuracy. The planes were scheduled to take off at noon; they were operating from a field about six miles from the target range.

"All clear," he advised, speaking to the transmitter, then to us. "They will be over here pretty soon now. Remember, keep your heads down!"

The first indication of the approach was the synchronized drone of the eighteen A-3 planes in the Group. It beat and throbbed like the lower registers of a mighty organ. At the cue, I closed the relay circuit and prayed that it would continue to work during the terrific concussion of the bombardment. Each plane was to release ten seventeen-pound bombs simultaneously. Like a swarm of angry hornets, the swift ships whizzed through a pass in the range of hills. They were no more than five hundred feet above the ground, flying in elements of three, staggered in echelon formation.

"Duck!" yelled Lee, as the first element released its load. Dropping like so many darts, the slender bombs rained down in a veritable shower. Wham! Wham! Wham! they cracked, with sharp, ear-split-

ting reports (the bombs' specifications are equivalent to seventy-five millimeter shells). A deeper toned explosion resounded above the chorus of bombs. It was the gas tank of one of the ships. Peeping over the edge of our barricade, we could see a tall shaft of ruddy flame marking the site of the direct hit. A heavy black mushroom of smoke hung over the entire range; through its haze we spotted the silhouettes of the raiding planes as they zoomed up and out of the zone. An "Archie" battery would have been absolutely at a loss in dealing with that squadron. In addition to their bomb loads, each one of the planes carries six fifty-calibre machine guns. That's Uncle Sam's triple-threat combination in the air. Observation, "egg laying," and strafing.

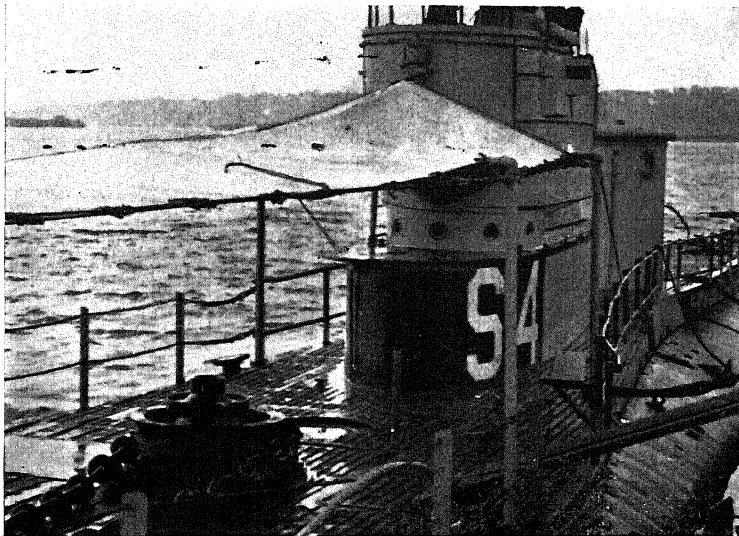
After the attack, the pilots landed to check on the damage. We joined them, stepping cautiously to avoid dud bombs, for several had landed without exploding. They could be detected only by the inch or so of tail fin that protruded above the ground; a slight jar would set them off, and Lord help the person who stumbled on one. Three of the eighteen ships bombed were totally demolished, and the rest bore marks of flying fragments.

"Not enough," growled Major Davenport. "It is my mission to completely destroy these ships. We will try again. This time with heavier ordnance." He referred to the deadly hundred-pound demolition bombs.

We found the camera intact, but it was well we had protected it so stoutly, for the housing revealed what a terrific beating it had taken from the bombardment. A new roll of film was substituted to cover the second attack, and we then returned to the dugout.

"They will fly at a much higher altitude this time," advised Lieutenant Lee, "and will be able to use bomb sights. Watch for a large percentage of direct hits."

We had hardly time to finish a cigarette before the planes reappeared. They approached in a big V, at full throttle. Down dropped the cigar-shaped demolition bombs, spinning as they assumed the perpendicular position of flight. I've never seen such a hellish display of explosives. Angry fans of orange flame shot up from all sides, and the concussion shook the ground like an earthquake. Great gouts of smoke spurted skyward, and the combined noise of roaring motors,

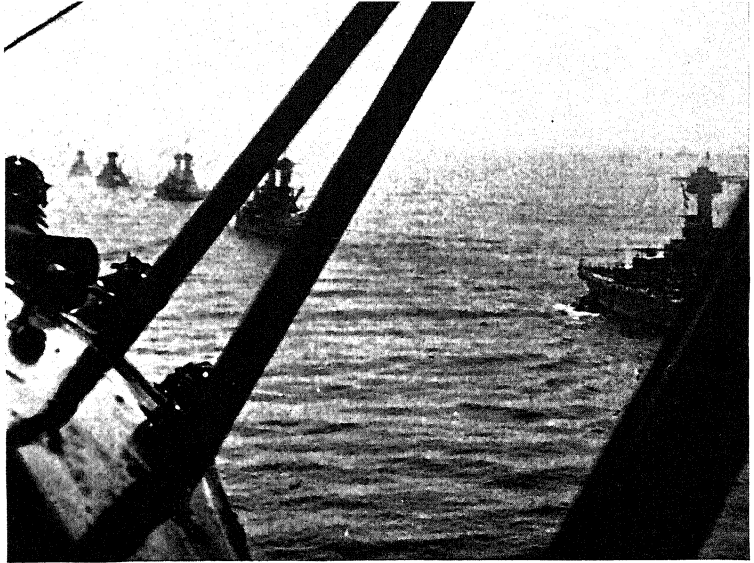


UP FROM THE DEPTHS. The *S 4*, once sunk off Provincetown with heavy loss of life, reconditioned and ready for experiments with the mechanical lung, the navy device planned to cut down casualties in submarine disasters.



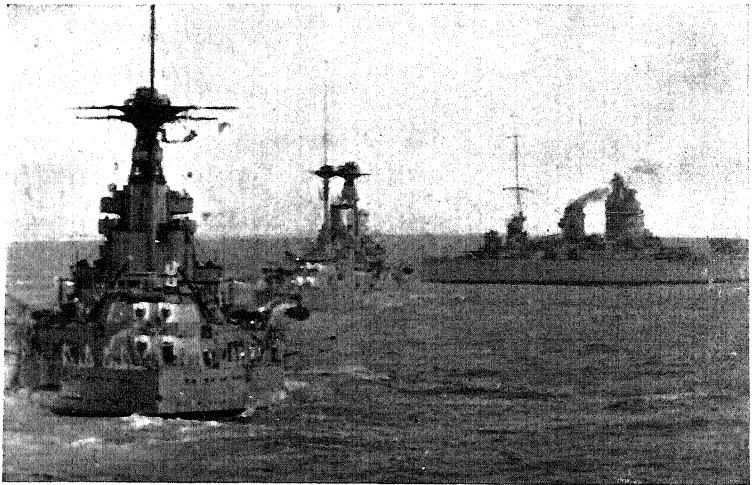
RISEING WATER. A photograph taken inside

the *S 4* during the tests. The men are working under a pressure of 28 pounds to the square inch. A moment after this was made, the salt water reached the batteries of the sound recording apparatus, and chlorine gas was generated. The lights went out, and the news crew, together with the inventor of the lung (Lieut. Charles Momsen, at right), left hurriedly through the escape hatch. The submarine at the time was resting on the bed of the Thames River, near New London, Conn.



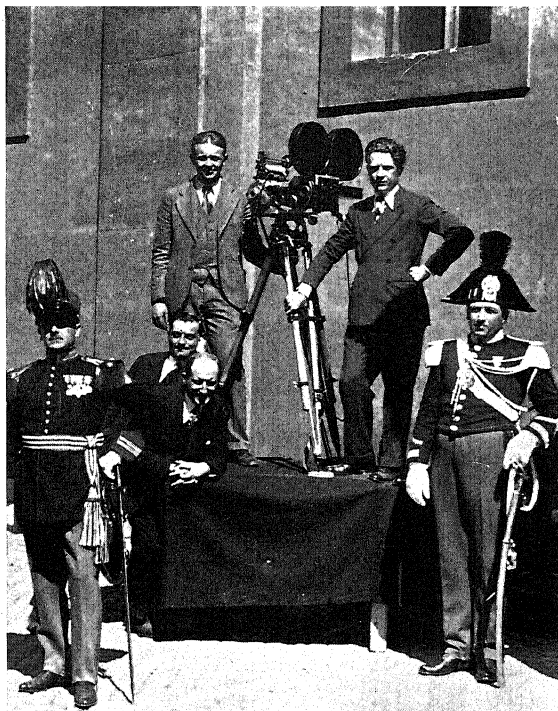
A PILOT'S
VIEW OF THE
NAVY.

At a hundred and twenty miles an hour it doesn't take an observer long to find out how many ships comprise a fleet. Stretching across open water, they formed perfect subjects for the cameraman, who had been forbidden to photograph them.



A NINETY-
DEGREE TURN
DURING CLOSE

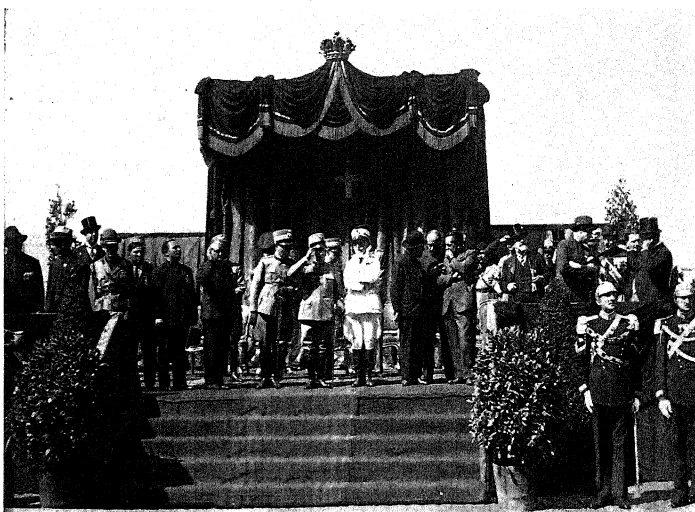
FORMATION MANEUVERS. Three of the King's Armada in a striking display of skillful maneuvering. Ponderous as these great vessels look, they answer their controls as rapidly as a yacht. Note the vessel at right making a sharp turn into formation.



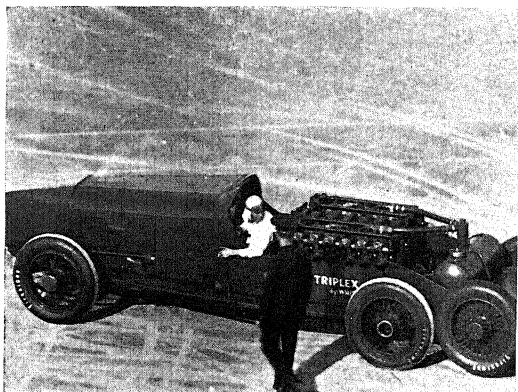
WITHIN VATICAN WALLS. Bill Jordon and Ettore Villoni register pride at being the first crew to bring their sound camera within the Vatican City. The commander of the Palatine Guard and a Vatican gendarme pose with them prior to an Easter concert.



ARMISTICE DAY IN ROME. While addressing thousands at the tomb of Italy's unknown soldier, Mussolini (on balcony at right) was treated to this unusual spectacle. The top of the news-reel truck (centre foreground) seems like a raft upon a sea of umbrellas.



VICTOR EMMANUEL III AND STAFF. Italy's ruler (at salute) reviews the forces of the Royal army and navy during a recent military pageant near Rome.



THE AMERICAN CONTENDER for the world's straight-away speed record. Lee Bible, Daytona Beach racing driver, tunes up his car before the final trial.



WHERE AUTOMOBILE SPEED RECORDS ARE SMASHED. The smooth, hard beach at Daytona. Note the danger flags set along the surf side of the course.



BETTER THAN THREE MILES A MINUTE. The giant Triplex whizzing down the beach on a trial run.



SCRAP METAL. All that was left of the racer after it swerved off the course to hurtle end over end, killing its driver.



MENELIK I. Following his coronation, Emperor Haile Selassie I unveils the magnificent bronze memorial to his illustrious ancestor.



THE AMERICAN CONSULATE AT ADDIS ABABA. After a long, dangerous drive from the east coast of Africa, McInnis and Hawks, the news crew, arrive at the Abyssinian capital.



THE KING OF KINGS. Emperor Haile Selassie I poses for the talkies and addresses the world in French.



AT THE ADDIS ABABA RAILWAY TERMINAL. Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, arrives to represent the royal family of the British Empire. He was just one of the many distinguished guests that attended the coronation.

bombs, and exploding gas tanks literally made one's eyeballs quiver. The surrounding hills reëchoed with the volume of sound. Detonations rumbled again and again as eighteen thousand pounds of high-order explosive ripped the very earth asunder. No wonder people crouched in terror of those murder ships that invaded the air of London and Paris during the war. The psychological effect alone is devastating. Slugs from the bellies of the bombs whirled and whined above and beside us, and many rattled against the barricade. What a session for the microphone that was!

As the last ship tripped its load, we noticed that one of the planes was circling above us as if to try again. He was putting the ship through a series of erratic manoeuvres. Suddenly we saw the reason for his behaviour. One of the bombs had not released properly, the rear suspending trigger having jammed. Now the pilot, by wagging his ship, was trying to shake off the "hung bomb." It was bound to slip free before long, and if it did at that particular moment, we were going to get the full benefit of it.

You should have seen us dig dirt. There was a little depression about fifteen feet from our position, and figuring it would offer a better protection against the lateral force of the bomb, I started crawling towards it. Some inner sense prompted me to look before moving too far. It was lucky that I did, for occupying the hole and coiling in anticipation of a spring was a nice healthy Diamond-back rattler. There was no doubt that he was going to raise Cain about being dispossessed. Talk about your situations—a hundred pounds of TNT about to drop on your head, and a mad rattler in the only safe spot!

"It's off!" yelled Lee. I buried my nose in the sand and waited with closed eyes. When the bomb went off I thought a door had fallen on me. I waited a few seconds, expecting a shower of tree trunks and débris. But nothing happened. Feeling myself all over, I was glad to find everything in place. I looked up; we all regarded each other sheepishly. The bomb had fallen in a clump of mesquite to our right, but the fragments had miraculously missed us.

"Say, fellows," I said, when my heart began to beat more normally, "who wants some snake meat for dinner? There's a man-size rattler over in that hole."

"The hell you say!" snorted Wheeler. "I'm not interested."

"Come on," laughed Lee, "let's shoot him."

"No siree!" exclaimed Wheeler. "You two can go on your damn snake hunt. I'm going to town and have me a bowl of chili at the Rio Vista. That's my meat."

Passing the hole, we noticed that the snake had scrambled for parts unknown. The explosion had probably scared him silly.

We shifted the camera for shots of the wreckage left in the wake of the air raid. The place was a shambles. Nothing remained but a crackling pile of burning fabric and twisted framework; not a living green thing stood anywhere near the débris; craters dotted the field like pock-marks, and a yellow, sulphurous deposit covered everything.

Back at the quarters of Captain Wainer, at Kelly Field, we sat around, discussing the bombing.

"Were you boys satisfied with the show?" asked our host.

"Both pictorially and for sound," we answered.

"That's all I wanted to know," laughed the officer. "Judging from what I heard out there to-day, I'm going to wear my ear muffs when I see the picture."

CHAPTER XV

The Last Picture

DOWN along the east coast of Florida is a remarkably smooth stretch of sand known as Daytona Beach. For miles it parallels the Atlantic straight as an arrow, and it is there that man has attained his highest speed on wheels. The firmly packed sands, left hard and fast by receding tides, offer a base for traction hard to find anywhere else on the globe, and it is for this reason that the A. A. A. holds its official super-speed trials at Daytona. To date, the limit of velocity has only been governed by the supreme performance of fine mechanism and no doubt, as man progresses in the fabrication of high-speed power plants, new records will be achieved.

The chances of disaster during these races against time have been minimized so far as natural hazards are concerned; but no one can divine the breaking point of mechanical apparatus except by test. In recognizing participants for these trials, the A. A. A. has laid down a rigorous list of requirements so that none but the fittest may qualify. This story, however, does not deal with the technique of racing, nor with anything else concerned with the game professionally. It is the story of a fearless cameraman, Charles R. Traub, who met the supreme risk to get his picture.

For fifteen years Charlie Traub had scoured the world for thrills. In the early spring of nineteen twenty-nine Charlie accompanied the United States Submarine Fleet during manoeuvres off the Florida Keys. Travelling aboard the *S-4*—it had been reconditioned for experimental purposes—Traub made some unusual pictures of the activities. The crowning shots of his story were made from the top of the conning tower while the great craft was under way. Lashed to the A frame atop the bridge, he coolly cranked as the sub made crash dives. Just barely awash, far at sea, Charlie worked unconcernedly; one

miscalculation on the part of the men in the control room, and he would have been swept away—not to be drowned, but to fall victim to the voracious man eaters that infest those waters. Needless to say, his efforts were well worth while, for an excellent picture resulted.

Having completed their manoeuvres, the submarines returned to their base at New London, and Charlie, in search of new material, hopped a train for Daytona Beach, where, at that time, the late Sir Henry Segrave was tuning up his nine-hundred-horse-power Napier *Golden Arrow* for a try at the world's straightaway speed record. Ray Keech had broken it the year previous with J. M. White's powerful Triplex, and his time of two hundred and seven miles an hour stood as a mighty mark at which to shoot.

Ever gracious, Sir Henry had permitted every phase of his preparations to be photographed. Perhaps you recall the pictures. There were scenes showing the mechanics piling chunks of ice into the lateral radiators of the sleek racer; ordinary methods of cooling were unfeasible in view of the tremendous heat generated by such a powerful motor. There were close-ups of Sir Henry explaining the ingenious device he used to assure dead-straight steering—a rifle sight focussed on a red bull's-eye at the end of the course, to relieve the pilot of all unnecessary peering and to guarantee an accurate course. Trial after trial was made up and down the beach, to learn every idiosyncrasy of the scientifically stream-lined machine, and to iron out all mechanical bugs. Another menace had to be considered too; little rifts of sand would sometimes be formed by the wind, and should the flying wheels of the racer hit these at the speeds attained, disaster could be the only result.

Monday afternoon, March eleventh, was the day selected by Segrave to make his official run. Over thirty thousand people fringed the sand dunes that flanked the course. Motor experts, sports writers, and newsmen in general covered the event. Traub, along with other newsreel men, set up his efficient Akeley camera at a point that commanded a comprehensive sweep of the official mile. Such races against time call for a flying start, and when the car crosses the starting tape it is performing at top speed. The actual start is a point four miles below the measured mile, thus allowing ample time to get up maximum velocity. Incidentally, the timing device consists of electric

tapes stretched across the track at the start and finish lines; plus a voltmeter to record the exact instant a racer's wheels crosses the tape; this is noted by a registered timer from Washington.

Sir Henry's long, low machine purred as it idled beside the pit. Mechanics were making last-minute adjustments while the pilot inspected his tires and steering mechanism. With a nod of approval, he waved the mechanics aside, kissed his wife, then squeezed into the narrow seat of the machine.

The powerful croon of the motor changed to an angry roar, and away lurched the *Golden Arrow* as thirty thousand throats cheered a good-luck wish. Down to the start the car rolled, loafing a mere seventy miles an hour; its high-gear ratio permitted no lower speed. Everything was quiet. The atmosphere was charged with that tension so familiar to all race fans. A phone tinkled in the officials' booth. Up and down the line of spectators, the magic words rippled, "He's off!" Necks craned southward as everyone tried to catch the first glimpse of the racer. Cameras began to click. The first indication of the car's approach was the sight of a plane as it scudded along directly above Segrave.

"Here he comes," whispered a timer with bated breath. A little speck could be seen streaking along the water's edge. The high-pitched whine of the motor became audible. Louder and louder it grew; bigger and more distinct became the machine. Now it was but a mile away, and the hum of the motor filled the air with its song. Speeding like the arrow it was dubbed, the car passed the plane, and in the next minute, faster than it takes to read, the hurtling car crossed the tape and was disappearing in a long tail of dust. The terrific crescendo of sound subsided almost with the passing of the racer.

"Got him," remarked Traub laconically, swinging his camera back to centre. Those of you who saw the picture will no doubt recall the shot and remember that fleeting glance of Segrave's white-helmeted head as he sat rigid, holding the volleying car on its unswerving course.

Back at the pit once more, Segrave turned the car over to his mechanics and made his way to the timers' booth. The official figures brought a grin to his usually serious visage, and he embraced his wife

exultantly. He had made it: 231.367 miles per hour. Better than three and one half miles a minute. The *Golden Arrow* had been well christened.

Gathered in their rooms at the Fernwood Hotel later, the newsmen discussed the race in detail.

"Guess that record will stand for awhile," said one.

"Without a doubt," agreed another.

"But what about Lee Bible?" interrupted a third. "He says he will better the mark with his Triplex. I was just talking it over with him at his garage."

"You're crazy," retorted the first speaker. "He hasn't even been accepted as an authorized driver by the A. A. A. yet."

"He's got a chance, though, and to-morrow the authorities are going to examine him for qualification," insisted Bible's champion.

"We—ll, I don't know," argued the second reporter. "Outside of dirt-track racing he has never monkeyed with this high-speed stuff. He's a nice enough guy, I'll admit, and I'd like to see him make it, but I say you've got to be a specialist to handle these multi-powered racers."

"You're quite right there, stranger," said a local scribe. "But in Bible's case I think he is a competent pilot to handle the Triplex. For two years he has nursed it. He knows every tappet and gear in it."

"Yes, I believe all of that," interrupted number one impatiently, "but you must realize that one must be more than just a mechanic to control such a racing car. It calls for a certain undefinable quality—the ability to act quickly, stimulated purely by reflex motives. From what I have observed about Bible I think he is a stolid, unemotional type of person; the direct antithesis of the man I would select to be a racing pilot."

"Don't you think ideals might enter into the question?" softly interposed the Daytona reporter. "More than one person has achieved wonders solely motivated by ambition. Remember, this race means a lot to Bible. All his life he has dreamed of this opportunity. It means freedom to pursue the things he likes best, and he believes the Triplex is the superior car."

The last statement got the boys off on another tack and all through

the night the air was thick with technical references to superchargers, overhead cam shafts, piston displacements, and all the nomenclature relative to automotive engineering. It was finally agreed that if Bible could ever get all of the Triplex's thirty-six cylinders percolating smoothly, he stood more than an even chance to cop the title, "Speed King."

The next afternoon Bible was out warming up the Triplex for the trial run to prove his ability as a qualified racing driver. It was some time before he could get the motor to behave to his satisfaction, but when it did, it purred with that throbbing note that is music to any motor fan's ear. Carefully checking off each point, the A. A. A. men quizzed Bible on all technicalities. Then, as a final precaution, he was asked to drive the car over the measured course. Three times the roaring monster, black, oily smoke belching from its manifolds, whizzed up and down the straightaway. The four-ton machine seemed like one of the new rocket cars as it buzzed along. The timers clocked a speed of better than 199 miles an hour on the last run, and this assured Bible of an official trial. It was scheduled for the next afternoon.

"That performance to-day has dissipated all my past skepticism," admitted the doubting Thomas of the prior evening's discussion, and all the boys ventured the opinion that perhaps another day's sun might see hung up an even greater mark than Segrave's.

In his room, which he shared with one of our boys, Traub was voicing his own idea of the next day's race. Larry Kennedy, better known as Booeey, was helping Traub as he cleaned his camera. The swirling sand had worked its way into the mechanism and he wanted to eliminate any chances of scratching the fast-moving negative.

"You know, Booeey," remarked Traub, without looking up from his work, "I don't like the way that machine swerves when Bible tries to slow it down. I watched it to-day, and every time he brakes it, the car veers off to one side."

"Maybe it's the sand ridges," said Kennedy. "At that speed a feather would shunt the car off its course."

"Maybe so, maybe so," muttered Traub, shaking his head speculatively.

At three o'clock the next day, the mighty Triplex was out on the

course once again. The tide was low, and conditions seemed ideal. Bible fussed around his beloved racer, and between adjustments he found time to pose for the movies. It was his big day. He kidded and joshed the boys as they pleaded for just one more close-up. Segrave came over to wish him luck.

"We are ready for the official run," called out a timer from his perch atop the A. A. A. booth. Bible nodded and slipped behind the wheel. Like an unwieldy bug, for it had none of the clean-cut lines of the *Golden Arrow*, the Triplex scuttled down to the start. Bluish flame winked from its multiple exhaust ports, and a trail of black smoke traced its progress.

As on the previous days, the boys set up their cameras along the sand dunes a good hundred feet in from the track. Traub, however, slung his tripod over his shoulder and plodded over to a point about three hundred yards from the finish line. Barney Markham, who was handling the final timing tape, shouted to Charlie, asking him why he chose that spot to work from.

"I have a hunch something is going to happen when Bible attempts to slow down after crossing the finish line, and I want to be near here in case it does," he explained seriously.

Mounting his camera well in from the course, Traub studied the long smooth stretch. The murmur of the surf was the only audible sound. Then a new note rose above the whisper of the sea. It was the drone of the speeding Triplex. Stiffening into action, the cameraman began to crank. Right hand revolving steadily, he scanned the beach through his finder for a sight of the streaking dot. He picked it up. Panning smoothly, holding the image squarely in the field of the lens, Traub carried the speeding car. With its thirty-six cylinders singing a mighty song of power, the racer whizzed across the tape and tore along, spurting sand and smoke behind it like the tail of a comet.

That official mile was traversed in better than twenty seconds, but just as the Triplex flashed across the finish, something happened. With a sickening lurch, it careened madly, wavering on two wheels. Then, completely out of control, the car hurtled end over end towards the unfortunate Traub, who, seeing the maverick plunge of the machine, quickly shifted to one side of his camera. But too late. With

a terrific impact the onrushing Juggernaut struck him squarely, mangling his body. Like a sack of meal, the fragments of his torso flew through the air to land beside the equally torn body of Bible, who had been catapulted from the death car. Nothing remained now but two bloody corpses and a twisted, sand-clogged chassis.

CHAPTER XVI

How They Brought the Great News from the King of Kings

IN THE fall of nineteen-thirty the cables announced the impending coronation of Ras Tafari as Haile Selassie I, at Addis Ababa, in wild Abyssinia. Here was an event of international importance. The crowning as emperor of the King of Kings, direct descendant from the romance between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon! It was a job worthy of testing the mettle of any organization. All contacts had to be made through diplomatic channels, and speed, in presenting the subject to the world, meant the marshalling of every known type of transportation. Even the hottest of stories becomes tepid after a few days.

When the news broke, Truman Talley, managing director of one of the big newsreel companies, happened to be in London arranging for a British edition of his company's releases. He phoned to New York to stress the importance of getting the Abyssinian story. It was left for the news editor, who controls the movements of the crews, to get into action.

The nearest available crew to Abyssinia happened to be Hawks and McInnis, who were in India covering the salt riots. A cable was filed off to them with instructions to drop everything and proceed to Addis Ababa via the fastest route. Raw film packed in hermetically sealed cans to prevent moisture was shipped directly to the scene of the event.

Realizing that speed was the biggest factor in securing a scoop, Talley conceived a daring move, requiring precision, coördination, and split-second accuracy. It called for the services of a sturdy airplane and a brave pilot. After interviewing a score or more applicants, the services of Captain W. Lawrence Hope, one of Britain's celebrated

war aces, and Captain Birkett, were secured. Well in advance of the coronation date, the two men hopped off for Abyssinia. Flying along leisurely in their small Puss Moth single-motored plane, they carefully studied the route in order to plot a course permitting them to make a hurried return flight with the film. Arrangements for fuel and supplies were made at the various airports, en route, and emergency landing fields were noted.

Hurrying to Paris, the manager laid plans for the reception of the film and conferred with custom officials so that no last-minute red-tape regulations would interfere with the quick transit of the developed negative between nations.

Upon arriving at Addis Ababa the aviators found Hawks and McInnis already on location. The news crew had been fortunate in booking passage on a swift steamer plying between Bombay and Aden; despite warnings, they had unloaded their sound truck from the steamer and nonchalantly driven by motor to the Abyssinian capital, quite oblivious of the perils of wild beasts and savage tribes.

For days before the actual ceremony the wild Ethiopian hordes were pouring down from their mountain retreats to do homage to the new commander. It was like a page torn from the ancient past. By the tens of thousands they swarmed into the city; wild dances and savage rites were performed for the king's delight; and decked out in all their barbaric splendour, the fierce chieftains swore fealty to Haile Selassie I. Taking advantage of the spectacle, the newsreel boys shot thousands of feet of film. The ferocious natives gasped in awe and delight when Captain Hope, upon inspecting one of their muskets, chanced to remove the ramrod. Like children, the natives followed his example and drew the polished steel shafts from their guns and held them aloft in glee. They had never even imagined the existence of such a thing.

Then came the day of days. Trainload after trainload of visiting celebrities, representing every power in the world, pulled into the gaily decorated terminal. Gravely, and with all the pomp of his position, the little black potentate met each arriving delegation. All this was being photographed by the crew. The royal band strove to please all visitors by playing each nation's anthem as best it could. To the tumult of frenzied subjects, gunfire, and the roaring zoom of visit-

ing aircraft, the monarch ascended his throne and ceremonially grasped his ancient sceptre. Following the actual crowning, the king unveiled a magnificent bronze statue commemorating the event. That was November second, nineteen-thirty. Ten thousand feet of negative had been consumed in the making of the story.

Working feverishly against time, Hawks and McInnis transferred the exposed negative from camera magazines to shipping tins. Out at the improvised airport Captain Hope awaited the cargo; his motor idled in readiness for a quick take-off. When the boys finally arrived with the film, the aviators became concerned at the weighty stack of film cans. Owing to its natural altitude, eighty-five hundred feet above sea level, the airdrome made take-offs with heavy loads rather a difficult problem. A test flight verified Hope's fears; it was going to be a tough job even to get off the ground with such a load.

There was but one solution. True to his make-up, Hope accepted it. All extra flying equipment was hastily tossed out of the plane. Engine spares, firearms, extra food, and even water was relinquished. Still not satisfied, the pilot stripped off his regular flying suit and motioned his partner to do likewise. The precious film was then packed in the cockpit, and everything was in readiness for the dash back to civilization.

The original line of flight was to follow the railroad from the capital to Djibuti; along the coast of the Red Sea to Massawa and then inland to Wadi Haifa where the Nile was to be picked up and followed to Cairo. But because of the delay in getting off, Captain Hope decided to fly directly to Khartoum. This meant passing over uninhabited lands, jungles of high elephant grass and great swamps. Captain Hope was that sort of man.

Shouting a word of farewell to the news crew, he thrust the throttle forward for the take-off. The two men left behind watched the plane's course apprehensively. For a minute it looked as if all were lost. Giving her the gun for all she was worth, and struggling to get the tail up, the pilot jockeyed his ship in an effort to leave the ground. It seemed glued to earth. Then, just at the edge of the field, the machine lifted in a sluggish manner, barely grazing the tree tops.

The first few hours of the flight were ideal. Then Hope made out strange mountain peaks ahead; his maps showed no such obstacles.

For a minute he thought that he had erred in calculations, but a consultation with Birkett revealed that the plane had not deviated from its compass course. Back came the stick, and up went the plane to a thirteen-thousand-foot level, with its load, that represented the ship's ceiling. Like bare wolf fangs, the serrated peaks menaced the tiny plane, but it made the grade, and the men, still putting faith in their reckonings, persisted.

Now followed long hours of flying over territory where a miscalculation or a stalled motor would have landed the fliers literally among man-eating beasts. Water buffalo and zebra could be seen grazing below, and on one occasion lions were spotted trotting across the plains.

But just as the sun was dipping below the hazy horizon, the waters of the Blue Nile were sighted. This cheered the men; they knew they were definitely on the correct course. Paralleling the silvery thread, they roared along towards their destination. Purple dusk changed to inky darkness, and still they continued without mishap. The gas was getting low, and the men redoubled their efforts to catch a first glimpse of Khartoum. By ten-thirty the beacon of the Royal Air Force Airdrome, situated on the edge of the desert at Khartoum, was sighted. By eleven Hope was directly over the field, and after circling till friendly flares were ignited, he nosed the ship into the field to rest and refuel. After a four-hour interval the men climbed aboard again and were off for Cairo. The hop was uneventful, and when the ship halted at the Egyptian capital, its arrival was announced to the outside world by cable.

Arrangements for Hope's arrival in Paris were rehearsed, and everyone felt the tension of the situation.

At four the next morning, the gallant craft shook the Egyptian dust from its heels for Tunis. Most of the trip was made over water, and on several occasions the fliers could see shoals of sharks cutting through the sea below. Tunis was the last stop on the Dark Continent, and from there the tired but determined men soared away for the flight across the Mediterranean to Nice.

Every foot of the way was a struggle, for nasty weather set in, and head winds hampered their progress materially. Up and down they shifted, trying various altitudes, seeking a friendly tail wind.

Nice was made safely. After sending a wire of notification, they pushed on to Le Bourget Field, Paris, where a waiting courier took the negative. Hope and his companion snatched a few hours of rest while waiting for a duplicate negative, which was being prepared at the Paris laboratories of the company. The film was developed in rapid time and a "dupe" struck off for the British Isles. The crossing from Paris was made in record fashion, and precisely at 3 p. m. Friday, the little oil-streaked ship rolled up to the British Custom Office at Croydon Airdrome. Exactly five days to the hour after leaving Addis Ababa, Hope had delivered his cargo.

The London *Daily Mail* said of this flight:

"Flying from Abyssinia over uncharted mountains and untold hazards en route, Captain Lawrence Hope and Captain Birkett set their gallant Puss Moth machine down at Croydon Airdrome after a round-trip flight of more than ten thousand miles (better than three times the distance of Lindbergh's record flight) in a successful attempt to deliver cinema films of the Ras Tafari coronation. The time was phenomenal under the conditions, and the fliers made the trip free of all conveniences and safety measures.

"Captain Hope's face was burned with the sun of Africa, which he had only left on the previous day, when he stepped from the plane attired only in gray flannel shorts and a blue blazer.

"History was made at great risk, for if the hum of the motor had once failed, he must almost certainly have met with disaster."

Thus ended the first leg of transportation. The Paris office struck off lavender prints to be shipped to various European news centres for "dupeing," cut and edited its version of the story, and shipped the negative via air to Cherbourg, where it was placed aboard one of the fastest Atlantic liners, bound for America.

While waiting for the film, the New York office staff were busy. Acting on the detailed information cabled in by the crew, they composed adequate titles and matched them with suitable music; the titles were printed in the characters of every tongue, and advance notices were mailed to all theatres. Posters, placards, and billboard sheets were printed in anticipation of the showing. The day of the

steamer's arrival was checked by the company's customs broker, and a speedboat raced down to Quarantine to take the film after the inspectors had affixed their stamps.

Newsreels are made up twice a week, and it so happened that the film's arrival coincided with a regular make-up day. No time was lost in screening the material. Then the editors got busy. Certain scenes were deleted, others were switched around so that a more graphic story might result. When necessary, new titles were substituted to conform with the continuity. Much material was consigned to the mighty fireproof vaults, where it would be filed, cross-indexed, and preserved for future editions or posterity. In the case of the Metro-tone edition, which features an off-stage voice explaining the action, a snappy talk was composed and spaced to match the action. Down in the recording studios, the announcer whom you all know as the "Globe Trotter" lent his voice to the picture.

After the story was rounded out to suit the editors, it was turned over to the cutting department, where it was spliced to its titles and linked with the other subjects that made up the reel for that edition. The master negative, after a final review by the editors, was then threaded into the giant duplex printing device, and the reproduction of thousands of prints commenced. Now the miles of positive stock were immersed in the developing baths, and in a few moments the image appeared; the hypo bath was followed by a water bath, and then, further to expedite the drying process, alcohol was poured into the final bath. Next, the glistening celluloid was stretched on rotating drying drums, and a few moments later saw it being polished and waxed. Each individual print was cut, placed in a container, and labelled for its destination. Then the delivery began. Every type of fast transportation was utilized, and the big Broadway houses received a copy almost, one might say, before it was dry.

Twelve days after Hawks and McInnis waved a farewell to Captain Hope in far-off Abyssinia, the stirring scenes of the coronation were flashed upon the screens of every sizable movie house east of the Mississippi, and another day saw the film distributed throughout the nation. At the same time, copies nestled safely in the care of pursers, aboard steamers en route to the four points of the compass, that everyone might see how a king is crowned.

Perhaps, when you next sit back comfortably to watch an event unreel, you will better realize what an army of people served you. Behind every subject is a story like this one of how they brought the Great News from the King of Kings.

“But what about the boys who shot that coronation subject?” you ask. “Where did they go from there?”

Oh—they’re aboard a junk somewhere off Saigon, in search of a Chinese pirate fleet.

CHAPTER XVII

Hopewell Two One

AS I write this, the biggest news story since the World War is under way here in Hopewell, New Jersey. A quiet, homely little town of six thousand souls, unruffled since Revolutionary days, it is now headquarters for the greatest aggregation of news gatherers ever assembled on one story. Hopewell, the town nearest Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh's estate, watches in wide-mouthed wonder at the army of strangers that has usurped its every doorstep. Gebhart's store, a sort of combined restaurant and candy store, once the lounging place of village idlers, now seethes with excited reporters, radio announcers, still photographers, and newsreel men. The technical devices of modern news services are set up all over the place. Radio monitor men crouch over control panels; teletype machines unreel the latest news, and the staccato clack of telegraph resonators carries on unceasingly. At the curb in front of the store is a veritable fleet of sound trucks with cameras set up and amplifiers ready for instant use. The single phone booth at this hastily organized field headquarters has a permanent queue of frantic news men waiting to put through calls to their respective offices. Its call is Hopewell Two One, and without a doubt it is the most overworked telephone in America to-day, for ever since that sly, audacious villain crept softly to the crib-side of Baby Charles Lindbergh and made his baffling escape with America's most famous child, Hopewell Two One has handled all the news details connected with the case.

On Tuesday evening, March 1st, I turned in rather early. There had been a lot of work connected with a New York Fire Department story, and I was tired. I planned a good night's sleep, because I expected to sail on an assignment to the Mediterranean on Saturday, and there was much to do.

There is something about the insistent jingle of a telephone at night

that has always struck me, but it seemed doubly ominous when I first heard it that fateful morning. It was still dark, and I muttered to myself as I groped, half asleep, towards the hand-set.

"Hello?" There was a pause. Wrong number, I thought, inwardly damning the service. Outside, the wind howled around the coping, seventeen stories up; the room was chilly; I lighted a cigarette. Through the casement windows I studied the ultra-modernistic bulk of a skyscraper that houses one of the great metropolitan tabloids; I reflected how nice it was to have it far enough away to appreciate its symbolical architecture. The rapid flash of ghastly blue limelights, in the photographic department of the paper, projected their weird shadows on the wall of an adjoining building; the traffic lights along Forty-first Street winked from green to red. There was a series of clinks in the receiver, then the familiar voice of my assignment editor. His normally calm diction seemed keyed a trifle higher.

"That you, Chic?"

"Um. What the he——"

"Grab a cab and come right over to the office."

"Not a fire, I hope?"

"Hell, no. Lindberghs' baby's been kidnapped!"

"Wha——"

"You heard me. Step on it, fellah!"

I was dumbfounded. It must be a phoney. Still, I thought, Haney wouldn't have called me on a bum steer. As I struggled into my clothes I glanced at my own youngster. Safe in her crib, there was a cute little smile on her face as she dreamed some little dream, her teddy bear snuggled beside her. Out there, somewhere beyond the skyline of Manhattan, a slimy rat was rushing to his hole with a tousled-haired kid whose parents would be frantic by now. I dashed off a note to my still sleeping wife and let myself out of the apartment. The wait for the elevator seemed interminable. I jabbed the button savagely. An upward rush of air, and then the car. A few seconds later I hailed a taxi.

"In a hurry, boss?"

"Yep. Get this trap rolling!"

Outside the office in the West Fifties stood two cars. One was a sound news outfit; the other, a powerful foreign roadster. Len Ham-

mond, cameraman, and J. C. Brown, contact man, were in the car; a road map lay outstretched on their knees.

"What's the gag?" I asked as I paid off the cabby.

"Straight tip. Know the way to Hopewell?"

"It's somewhere around Princeton."

"Good. Suppose you lead the way. Brownie and I can discuss the details. Never mind going upstairs. Here's the dope."

I studied the slip of paper Len had thrust into my hands; the words seemed incredible:

11:03 A. P. FLASH. LINDBERGH BABY KIDNAPED. DETAILS FOLLOW.

I squinted at my wristwatch. It was past three. Evidently the office had also been dubious of the report and had checked back.

"Let's roll," said Brown. "Make the first stop at Trenton. We'll look in on the troopers," he shouted.

We screeched to a halt at the familiar yellow triangle that marks the Jersey State Trooper's headquarters. An unknown officer greeted us.

"Any news?" we asked.

"Nothing as yet. Colonel Lindbergh phoned us a little after ten that his child was missing. We detailed several men to go out there and sent an alarm over the teletype."

"What's the best way to get there?"

"I'm going out myself. I'll show you."

Back to Warren Street we dashed, towards the monument that marks the start of the road to Hopewell. The officer beside me offered an occasional direction. The rows of stubby forty-five calibre bullets in his belt gleamed dully against the bright blue of his tunic. He leaned forward, better to scan the road.

"Turn left here."

We left the smooth concrete for a rough cut-stone road; its deeply rutted grooves and sharp bends slowed us considerably. Limned in the glare of our headlights I could see the nasty ditches and soft shoulders that bordered its sides. The officer told me it was the Werts-ville Road and that it led past the entrance of Lindbergh's estate. What a hell of a place to live, I thought.

"Slow up!"

The command came as we approached an intersection beside an abandoned farmhouse. The road disappeared into the forbidding shadows of mature trees and dense underbrush. It was a crude, ungraded road that looked as though the only vehicle that ever traversed it might be a buckboard; yet it is the driveway to Colonel Lindbergh's estate, and his snappy, close-coupled sedan has rolled over it innumerable times, not to mention the cars of many other distinguished persons. Who, I thought, was the interloper that guided the kidnap car down the driveway to disappear into thin air?

A motorcycle bearing a trooper came abreast of us, and the officer astride it scrutinized us sharply. The staccato bark of other motorcycles reached our ears. It was rapidly getting light. A swerve to the right, and before us stood the home of the Lone Eagle. Its white mortar-washed walls lend an appearance of age to the dwelling, but the brown, freshly graded topsoil, bereft of any landscaping, betrays the place as a reproduction of some early American home. An excited cluster of police officers stood beside the corner of one of the wings. They were studying the ground intently, and a few feet from them another group was examining a ladder. It was a queer affair composed of three sections, two of which were well made, while the third was crudely fashioned.

"Watch where you step, boys," warned an officer. It was Major Schoeffel of the State Police; beside him stood Chief Williamson of the Hopewell Police Force, the first officer to reach the scene of the crime. Other cars came up the driveway: men bearing still cameras, men scribbling notes, women dressed in comfortable sport suits. The news hounds were on the trail.

By noontime we had made all of the preliminary shots for a special release. Augmented by other crews, we made scenics of the location, shots of the ladder placed against the wall, close-ups of the footprints, and cut-in shots showing the troopers searching the brush and woods that surround the estate. Colonel Breckenridge, the distinguished-looking adviser to Lindbergh, gave out an interview and arranged to have coffee and sandwiches brought out to the boys. Lindbergh himself made several appearances but would not discuss the case with

anyone save the police. He looked sort of wan, but was carrying himself in the same calm manner so familiar to those who have been near him. Brown, our contact man, asked if the Colonel would make a talkie appeal, but it was refused. The flyer was asked if he had any amateur movies of the baby; it was pointed out that such film could be enlarged to thirty-five millimetres and released to all theatres for purposes of identification. The Colonel said he knew of no such pictures, but Brown recalled having heard that the Morrow family had made such shots. Lindy's face brightened at the suggestion, and he put a call through to Englewood to locate the film. It was there, and soon prints were being made of the baby, showing it playing in its crib, and various angles of it creeping about.

More cars kept arriving, and we speculated as to the occupants. A special sixteen-cylinder sedan, resembling an ambulance, purred up to the house, and for a minute we thought the baby had been returned, but it developed that the car contained only representatives of a great radio broadcast chain, and apparatus. The significance of the preposterous crime began to sink in, and during a lull in activities we exchanged theories with each other.

Colonel Schwarzkopf, Superintendent of Jersey State Police, took active command of the investigation, and the Lindbergh garage was transformed into headquarters for troopers. A teletype machine and telegraph keys were linked up to the private circuit of the police. Details of the baby's description, diet, and health were released to the press. Immediately after this, all people not officially connected with the investigation were asked to retreat down the road to leave the ground clear for searching purposes. As the first shadows of evening fell, a chill crept into the air, and someone built a small bonfire. It was a foolish thing to do in a spot so overrun with dry grass, and before long the Hopewell Fire Department had to be summoned to extinguish the spreading blaze. (Later, we learned that many papers carried full-page banners announcing that a farmhouse had burnt adjacent to Lindy's home. It was the first indication of the hysteria that was to follow the case.)

"Where are we going to roost to-night?" someone asked.

"I'm stickin' right here," declared another.

"But we've got to eat and call the office."

"That's right," chorussed the crowd. "Where's the nearest phone?"

"Try Gebhart's restaurant on Broad Street, Hopewell," suggested a trooper.

There was a mad scramble for cars, and soon the Wertsville Road was alive with speeding vehicles. A great pall of dust, made opaquely luminous by the glare of hundreds of headlights, rolled toward the Sourlands like a charge of lethal gas. I wonder what the anxious father atop the hill, who so intently hates publicity, thought as he watched that mad cavalcade. Did he realize that many of those folks were parents like himself and just as anxious to have the baby returned to him, or did he damn them for intruding upon his personal affairs?

Up till that evening Gebhart's store probably never contained more than ten people at one time, and the rooming house operated in conjunction with it only catered to itinerant motor tourists. Mr. Gebhart was going about his usual duties the evening of March 2nd, and he had just completed a list of supplies that he thought needed replenishing from Trenton. As he started toward the lone phone booth in the store he smiled complacently. A private booth lent tone to the establishment, and the blue insignia, marking a phone within, had drawn many a prospective customer for food or cigarettes. Mr. Gebhart was about to drop a nickel and turn the little side crank that signalled the local operator when he heard a noise that sounded like an approaching whirlwind. Raucous horns, klaxons, two-tone trumpets, screeching brakes, the shouts of excited people, and the clump of many feet on the porch of his establishment. He looked out. It seemed as if a million wild-eyed madmen were trying to burst into the store. One succeeded, and as he came running towards the booth Mr. Gebhart paled a little. The next second he found himself yanked out of the booth and in the midst of the mob. A hawk-eyed individual with coat collar turned up, hat pushed back on his head, was shouting into the transmitter. He jiggled the hook savagely.

"What the hell's the matter with this phone?" he yelled.

"Lemme at it," shouted another. "You big-city wise guys don't know how to operate a side winder."

"Nerts to you, yokel," retorted the occupant of the booth. "I was here first, and here I stay."

"Throw him out!" yelled the crowd. And in short order Mr. Gebhart's telephone booth was on its side. The first person to establish a connection over Hopewell Two One was in a horizontal position when he did so.

The store resembled a railroad terminal at the commuters' rush hour. A constant buzz of conversation was in the air. Mr. Gebhart was arm weary from dealing out cigarettes, food, and beverages, not to mention the effort required to press the keys of the cash register. His ears drank in the mystic jargon of news men of all types; queer sounding technical terms drifted to him.

"Gotta fix this gain control."

"They'll simplex the phone lines."

"My deadline is about due!"

"This goddam shutter won't drop."

"Boy, the ol' upper case will get a play to-night!"

It was all very strange to the proprietor of the store, but there was one thing that he was sure of. Prosperity had returned to Hopewell.

There was no sleep in Hopewell that night. Cars and motorcycles tore through the town constantly; the incoming trains disgorged more news recruits; big-time by-line writers milled with the little fellows; anybody's guess as to the facts in the case was as good as another's. Sob sisters arrived. Radio men, reporters, photographers, and news-reel men exchanged dope. Everyone, no matter what angle of news they represented, conferred together. Usually, each type of news gatherer attacks the problem from his angle only. Our job offered a tough nut to crack. We couldn't build up the facts at hand; we had to get something tangible to work upon.

Thursday morning dawned warm and clear, and we drove out to the estate to make some interviews. Upon arriving, we found the driveway blocked where it entered the Wertsville Road, and the troopers passing in only cars that contained state or police officials. Captain Walsh, called in on the case from Jersey City, posed for us and outlined a plan whereby news men could get the latest developments on the case. He said that Colonel Lindbergh would not deal with us directly, but had arranged to communicate with Governor A. Harry Moore's secretary at the State House, Trenton, fourteen miles away. There was no alternative. It was quite obvious that nothing

further could be photographed around the estate, so, leaving a crew on watch at Hopewell, we drove to Trenton for an interview with the Governor. He received the news men in his reception room and invited them to make it their headquarters. Mr. Toohey, his secretary, stood by the phone connected directly to Lindbergh's house and relayed the questions and answers between the press and the Colonel. As soon as they were all in, there was a mad scramble for the phone booths in the corridor of the State House to establish contact with the standbys at Hopewell. Mr. Gebhart's store had been selected as the field camp for the news. Imagine a hundred-odd men, using five booths, all ultimately calling their representatives in Hopewell, and you can realize what an overworked instrument Hopewell Two One was.

The first night at the State House was something. The oil reproductions of New Jersey's venerable leaders of the past frowned down upon the spectacle of fourscore and more tired news men trying to amuse themselves. Stud and black-jack predominated. My partner was playing backgammon with one of the opposition. No one dared leave the scene of pertinent news developments. The story might break any minute. Outside, our cars lined the curb, ready for a quick dash to any spot where the kidnappers might be apprehended. Telegraph boys paged men; a veteran retainer of the state hobbled in with the information that Mr. Snyder of the *American* or Miley of the *News* was wanted. He became more grouchy with each summons. The boys began to bait him, and one with a glint of mischief in his eye went across the hall to telephone. We watched the state employee take the message. His gullibility can be appreciated when I say that he ambled into the room with the call, "*Ballyhoo* wants their Mr. Burp to call right away." The first indication we had that someone had given Governor Moore's private phone extension was when that harassed executive sent out the statement that he was tired of having editors call him and say, "Get Blank on the wire, like a good fellow."

More than forty-eight hours had elapsed, and not a single lead had developed save the few meagre facts released in the original interviews. Offices began calling for news; rumours were rife, but nothing definite came to light.

After a short rest we looked out upon a cloudy Friday. The warmth of the preceding days was missing. The first break in the vigil was the announcement that Colonel and Mrs. Lindbergh had signed an appeal to the kidnappers that their child be returned quickly, and that no harm would come to the culprits. We set up and photographed the document when a courier brought it down from the house. All through that day we cruised between Princeton, Hopewell, and Trenton on tips. People in all three localities had private opinions of the case, and we wanted to record those that seemed of any value. Tips came in from all sources; our watchers at the crossroads reported any strange operations near the house. If a stranger passed by the guard, the information was relayed to Gebhart's store, and old Two One transmitted the news to the waiting world. Still no news came from the house on the hill. You can't keep news men in suspense too long without something snapping, however, and the situation at Hopewell was getting tense. Minor altercations took place. There would be a derogatory remark passed, and then the fur would fly. The men had to turn to other devices to forget the strain.

By now, the telephone company had managed to install several extra instruments, but the only number anyone could think of was Hopewell Two One, and that was that. The son of the owner of one of America's greatest chains of newspapers personally supervised a complete editorial staff where it was set up in one of Gebhart's rooms. The galaxy of star writers increased. Two women chatted together; one was a native of Hopewell; she was dumbfounded when she learned she was speaking to Jane Dixon, one of newspaperdom's finest. Windsor McKay spent hours on end talking to people who gaped when they realized who he was. Parrot of the *Herald-Trib.*; DeLong of the *Sun*; Dixie Todd from Washington; big names in radio; star cameramen from all over. Not even an inauguration could draw such a crowd. In our own circle one ran across men one had not seen for ages. One chap waved a hello to me. The last time I'd seen him was when we both made a trip to the Orient two years previous. An old-time radio friend extended his hand. We had last conversed over sidecar cocktails at Simpson's on the Strand. What a show! And all because of a mild chap who detests publicity intensely.

Saturday dawned clear and somewhat colder. Our first job for the

day was to photograph the incoming police representatives that had been summoned by Governor Moore from all points of the United States. They came by car, train, and plane. Prosecutor Swanson of Illinois, Commissioner Mulrooney of New York, Hoover of the Department of Justice, all posed, then left for the Lindbergh home.

Night fell, with its usual collection of rumours, and some sounded like good tips. Hopewell Two One reported that Captain Walsh had left on a swift trip to Princeton. Rumour had it he was going to hold a secret conference with Dr. Hibben of the University. Fifteen minutes after the tip, cars bearing photographers, reporters, and newsreel apparatus were in front of the Doctor's home. Nothing developed. We later learned that Walsh had come to town to buy some shaving articles. Another tip sent us to Princeton Junction. A strange man had been seen to get off a train there. Back at the State House, later, we learned of "Red" Johnson's (Betty Gow's boy friend) apprehension in Hartford. A hurried phone call to the New York office dispatched a crew from there to the Connecticut capital, and we made a circuit of the three airports near Trenton. Lindy, it was reported, was going to hop off for Hartford. Nothing transpired. Nerves began to tingle. The men at Trenton became more irritated with the meagre details relayed to them from Colonel Schwarzkopf.

"It's a stall."

"Somebody's trying to hog the glory."

"Has Ellis Parker been called in?"

"Something's not kosher."

These were some of the remarks overheard in the corridors of the State House. Then, the first big news. The Colonel and his wife had signed a statement authorizing two New York racketeers to act as go-betweens in negotiating with the kidnappers! In view of Lindbergh's straightforwardness, it seemed mythical that he do such a thing unless he had good reason. Who told him to name Spitalo and Bitz? The men were known to be "right men" and could be depended upon to act squarely, but where did the flyer get the information? Demands to see the original ransom note, to get the name of the person naming Spitalo and Bitz, to speak to Lindbergh personally, all were ignored. A trooper brought the signed appeal to Trenton, and, after hooking up lights, we photographed it for release. Immediately after, it was

broadcast via radio to the entire world. The signed note never left the keeping of the trooper, and it was returned to the Lindbergh home by him. The case to date had revealed an astounding series of peaks where tension raced at top speed. There would be a lull for a period, then some hot tip would set everyone scrambling to verify it. We rolled over three hundred miles during the week-end on what promised to be everything from the kidnappers to the appearance of the baby itself.

One of the hottest tips was whispered in the corridors of the State House on Monday night. A girl, it was said, wearing a blue leather coat was to arrive on the seven o'clock bus from Camden. Two State Troopers were to meet her and take her to the Lindbergh home for questioning. One by one, men left the capitol, and over at the bus terminal a few minutes later there must have been a hundred and fifty people waiting to swoop down on the rendezvous. Movie cameras were set up and hidden around corners; still men had cameras and flash lamps ready; helpers to reporters occupied phone booths with open lines. No troopers turned up, and it looked like a fake, when the bus rolled in. Before it stopped, a girl—she was wearing a blue leather coat—jumped out and started running up Perry Street. Then the chase began. Men shouting, flash lamps shooting off their startling, silent bursts of light, bedlam. Cars crashed into each other; windows went up; a police whistle's penetrating trill rose above the uproar. The girl kept her face covered and ran from doorway to doorway. She found a store open. In she went, with a hundred people after her. The storekeeper nearly fainted. Flashlight powder smoke obscured everything, and the poor girl cowered behind a soda fountain. The police finally arrived in a car, and we raced after them when they took the girl to headquarters for questioning. That was a surprise party for that precinct when the boys arrived. It looked like a riot.

"Clear out!" yelled the desk lieutenant.

"We want to see the girl," was the chorussed answer.

"Clear out, I say!"

"In your hat," was the reply, and to add insult to injury, one scribe leaned over the desk and said, "Lemme a nickel, lieutenant, I gotta call my office."

It later developed that the girl suffered from the delusion that she had been heaven-sent to tell Lindy that the baby was to be dropped over his house in a parachute. Someone asked if the ransom money was to be sent up in a sky rocket. As we filed out of the station house we witnessed the arrival of the Hopewell crowd. They had heard about the arrest over Hopewell Two One and had made the fourteen-mile drive in fifteen minutes through as nasty a wind and snowstorm as ever raged in that territory.

A bitter cold wind hit me when I left the Stacy Trent to resume the watch at the State House on Tuesday morning, one week after the crime. It penetrated to the very marrow, and as I shivered, the thought struck home that I might have been lolling in flannels on shipboard somewhere in the Gulf Stream at that precise moment. For the first time since I'd left New York I recalled that I was supposed to sail for the Mediterranean that preceding Saturday. Even the office had let the matter drop. After all, the trip was for the purpose of gathering feature stuff. We were on hot news.

The New Jersey Senate and Assembly was convened that day, and every so often members would sneak out of their chambers to get the latest news from the men collected in the press room. After being a week on the story, everyone was too jumpy to be answering questions, so some wag posted a placard on the door of room 30 that read: **LINDBERGH PRESS ROOM—POLITICIANS PLEASE KEEP OUT.**

Nothing developed on the case that day, but we made some footage on the way the story was being covered. We made shots of the men pouring out of the revolving door of the capitol. When the boys were on a hot tip the door revolved at about sixty R. P. M. Then there were angles of men sleeping on tables or playing checkers; bits showing the radio set-ups and methods of transmitting the news to the outside world. We learned some interesting facts connected with the story. For instance, that it cost over fifteen thousand dollars a day to keep the long lines and carrier waves of the radio stations operating on a twenty-four-hour schedule; that over five hundred crack writers were intimately connected with the story, and that many had carried on their normal duties as well. One that struck me was the fact that a certain well known book reviewer did a fifteen-hundred-

word criticism on some new novel while he rested between rumours.

Wednesday saw a little flurry for us when Colonel Schwarzkopf came down from Lindbergh's home to outline the policy of news censorship. He stated that Lindbergh would absolutely not discuss the case with anyone, and that no pertinent questions would be answered. All press questions for the past three days have been formulated by the reporters, transmitted to the Lindbergh home via teletype, and the answers are returned by the same method. The news is rarely significant, and the answers are decidedly laconic. Leading questions in most cases have been completely ignored.

To-day is Thursday. Nine days have elapsed, and the story still remains a mystery. At this writing, eight o'clock in the evening, I have just returned from a day-long patrol of the territory. Out in Hopewell the boys are grim in the determination to stick it out. They feel that it would be a shame to quit after waiting so long. They resent the idea that relief crews be sent down from the home office. The doorman of the hotel has stopped asking me if there are any new developments. He can tell by my face that there is nothing new. As I sit here typing, stopping occasionally to gaze out at the winking lights of Trenton, I ask myself questions. Was the kidnapping an outside job? What is going on in that house atop Sourland Hills? Why are the police so reticent? Who knows? Their reasons may be good ones. There are some funny angles to the case, and no mistake.

I cannot continue this story because my deadline is reached. The answers to the above questions will probably be known by the time this copy is set in type. Yet I shudder when the thought enters my mind that they may never be answered. There is not a single person covering this story that doesn't pray for the safe return of that cute little baby. If you saw him in the movies you saw what a bright little youngster he is.

Nine-day wonder. The unwritten deadline of the news world. Of the questions Who? When? Where? Why? and How? only two have been satisfactorily answered. By now the child could be in Europe.

It has been a big week for news, but none of it has averaged the space devoted to the Lindbergh case. John Philip Sousa, the march king, has passed on, and so has Aristide Briand. The Sino-Japanese situation is growing more threatening by the hour; a terrific storm

took heavy toll of life along the Atlantic seaboard, and a tragic tank explosion in Camden vies with the details of a gruesome trunk murder in Philadelphia. And so it goes. The march of time. This story, too, will come to an end. I hope it has a happy solution. Then Hopewell will drop back into obscurity.

THE END

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